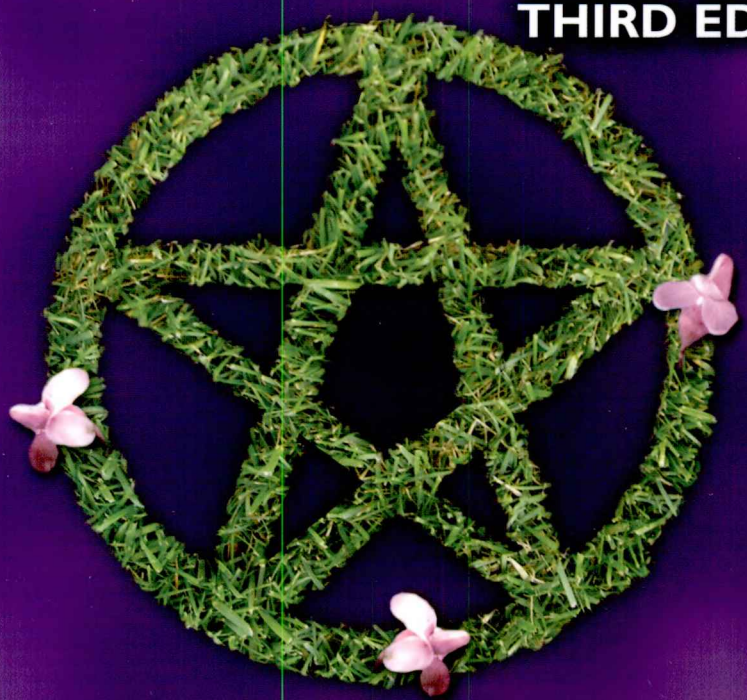
THE COMPLETE IDIOT'S GUIDE® TO

Learn to walk the magickal path with the God and Goddess

Wicca and Witchcraft

THIRD EDITION



Denise Zimmermann and Katherine A. Gleason
Revised with Miria Liguana

Dear Reader,

Picture a journey to a magickal and mystical place where anything can happen. You are about to embark on such a trip, an adventure into the realm of witchcraft, magick, and empowerment. This is a place where the imagination and purity of childhood meet with spiritual growth and the wisdom of the adult world.

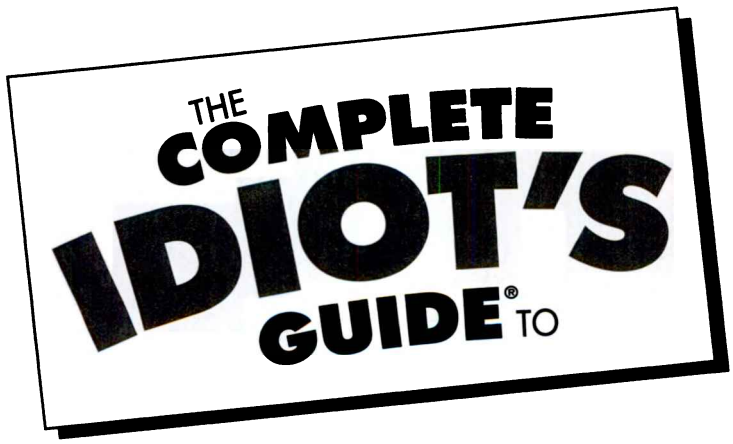
Learning the craft is not just about developing your magickal powers. It's about spirituality and working with the God and Goddess in a loving and nurturing way. The journey you will take is not an easy one, but the rewards and fulfillment far outweigh the difficulties of the road. Your first step will be to take a look inside yourself. If you let them, the God and Goddess will empower you with spirituality, knowledge, and self-esteem.

As children, we all dreamed of waving a magick wand and casting a spell. Well, dreams really do come true. In your study of Wicca and witchcraft, you will discover other realms that you thought existed only in childhood fantasies. As you embark upon your journey, you will meet magickal beings and learn to work with parallel worlds that coexist with our own in time and place but in another dimension. You'll learn how to tap into these worlds, and by doing so, you will develop a new way of looking at life, yourself, and the earth.

All you have to do to start your magickal journey is open this book. You'll find that although you might have come for the adventure, you'll stay for the magick.

Denise Zimmermann

Katherine A. Gleason



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by Denise Zimmermann and Katherine A. Gleason
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This One
BG2H-CWT-OKLY

A member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc.

ALPHA BOOKS

Published by the Penguin Group

Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, USA

Penguin Group (Canada), 90 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 700, Toronto, Ontario M4P 2Y3, Canada (a division of Pearson Penguin Canada Inc.)

Penguin Books Ltd., 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

Penguin Ireland, 25 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, Ireland (a division of Penguin Books Ltd.)

Penguin Group (Australia), 250 Camberwell Road, Camberwell, Victoria 3124, Australia (a division of Pearson Australia Group Pty. Ltd.)

Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 11 Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi—110 017, India

Penguin Group (NZ), 67 Apollo Drive, Rosedale, North Shore, Auckland 1311, New Zealand (a division of Pearson New Zealand Ltd.)

Penguin Books (South Africa) (Pty.) Ltd., 24 Sturdee Avenue, Rosebank, Johannesburg 2196, South Africa

Penguin Books Ltd., Registered Offices: 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

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International Standard Book Number: 978-1-59257-533-6
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2006922333

09 08 8 7 6 5 4

Interpretation of the printing code: The rightmost number of the first series of numbers is the year of the book's printing; the rightmost number of the second series of numbers is the number of the book's printing. For example, a printing code of 06-1 shows that the first printing occurred in 2006.

Printed in the United States of America

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For details, write: Special Markets, Alpha Books, 375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014.

Publisher: *Marie Butler-Knight*
Editorial Director: *Mike Sanders*
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Book Producer: *Lee Ann Chearney/Amaranth Illuminare*
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Cover Designer: *Rebecca Harmon*
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Layout: *Ayanna Lacey*
Proofreader: *Aaron Black*

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Foreword

If you are reading this foreword, it is only because I have succumbed to Witches' Local Union 719 and their promise to turn me into a newt if I didn't write it. Now don't get me wrong, I have nothing against newts. In fact, I kind of like them. But it is quite difficult to type manuscripts when you are one.

Newts. Witches' spells. Love charms. Flying broomsticks and cauldrons. Halloween. It's amazing how many stereotypes still exist about Wicca and witchcraft. We are living in a time when a tremendous amount of knowledge is available to the average person, and yet there still exist a great deal of misconceptions about, and even intolerance of, Wicca. Now, I am not Wiccan, but even I get raised eyebrows over my own magickal life. I can only imagine what Wiccans and witches still experience.

Informative and fun, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Wicca and Witchcraft, Third Edition*, breaks down the misconceptions and myths about one of the most ancient and empowering traditions on the planet. It is a guide for beginners and advanced alike. Never has so much information on Wicca and witchcraft been available from a single source. The authors, Denise Zimmermann and Katherine A. Gleason, cover every facet in the world of Wicca and witchcraft, and they do so with simple respect, wisdom, and humor.

This book teaches the wonders of creating and living a magickal life. From simple divination to practical spell work to sacred ritual, every aspect of this reverent and magickal tradition is explored. The reader is taken by the hand and guided along the path of natural wonders with living history, practical explorations, common-sense advice, and gentle encouragement.

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Wicca and Witchcraft, Third Edition, will weave a magickal spell of new understanding, knowledge, and wonder around you and your life. And that's not just the newt in me speaking!

—Ted Andrews

Ted Andrews is an internationally recognized author and teacher. He has written more than two dozen titles, which have been translated into more than 20 foreign languages. His books include the best-selling *Animal-Speak: The Spiritual & Magical Powers of Creatures Great & Small* and *How to Meet and Work with Spirit Guides*, the award-winning *Animal-Wise*, and the delightful *Magic of Believing* from the new series, *The Young Person's School of Magic and Mystery*.

Introduction

Right now, are you asking yourself, do witches really exist? Well, we are here to tell you, they absolutely do. Through the information in this book, you'll find out what and who witches really are. You'll also enhance your own spirituality and will grow and become empowered through the wisdom of the Craft.

Perhaps you are curious and hope to learn more about a subject that has often been shrouded in mystery. Or it could be that you are looking to make a change in your life. Perhaps you are a seeker on a spiritual road. Or you are looking around for a road, a path, a direction that feels right for you. Spiritual fulfillment is one of the primary tools that help us on our journey to wisdom. Our ancestors knew this. And they have given us a way to make this change—the power of witchcraft.

How to Use This Book

Read through the first few sections of this book before you make any hard-and-fast decisions. Give yourself the time and the space to decide if a practice of witchcraft feels right for you. Before you run out and buy a lot of magickal tools, try the exercises we've provided and see how they feel. As you progress through the book, do a ritual or two. And you may want to try some of the spells. Are you ready? Hop on your broom, hold on tight, and prepare to fly!

This book is divided into six parts:

Part 1, "Wicca Wisdom," introduces you to the beliefs and moral code of Wicca. We also discuss the history of witchcraft and its growing popularity in the present day.

Part 2, "The Wiccan Way," takes an in-depth look at Wiccan beliefs. We also examine some of the responsibilities of being a witch and introduce Wiccan ritual and some basic magickal tools.

Part 3, "So You Want to Do Magick?" is where you'll learn how to prepare yourself for ritual. You'll also learn how and where to do ritual.

Part 4, "Working Magick," takes a closer look at ritual and celebrates the Wiccan holidays. You'll also learn about magickal natural objects and entities.

Part 5, "Any Time Is the Right Time for Magick," shows you how to work with astrology and the calendar to enhance the effects of your magick.

Part 6, "Witches' Brew: Notions, Potions, and Powders," is where you will learn all about spells—how to write them and how to cast them. You'll also find a year-and-a-day-long plan to guide you along the Wiccan Way.

At the end of the book, you'll find two helpful appendixes: a list of resources to help you learn more, and a Magickal Record sheet that you can copy and use to record your own magick rituals in your grimoire.

Extras

In addition, we've scattered boxes throughout the book with definitions, warnings, tips, and fascinating tidbits of information to help you learn and understand even more about Wicca and witchcraft.

def•i•ni•tion

Here we introduce you to the terms used in Wicca and witchcraft. Speak the speak!

So Mote It Be

These tips will increase your understanding of Wicca, witchcraft, and yourself.

Webweaving

In these boxes, you'll find all kinds of fascinating Wiccan facts.

Banish!

These boxes warn you against pitfalls you might encounter.

Acknowledgments

From Denise: I would like to thank Lee Ann Chearney and her mom, Gloria, for giving me the opportunity to do this book. I also would like to thank Katherine and her kitty for all those late-night phone sessions, lengthy conversations, and fits of laughter. To my friend and business partner, Carol, for her encouragement, and members of the Coven of the Blue Crab for their support and kindness, I thank you. Special thanks, all my love, and appreciation to my wonderful husband, Lee, for his gentle kindness, support, and belief in my abilities. And foremost, I would like to dedicate this book in loving memory to my father, who believed that all I had to do was open my arms and I could touch the stars.

From Katherine: Thanks to Denise and thanks to Denise again for staying up so late talking, for her good humor, generous and gracious spirit, patience, and also for all the magick. Thanks, too, go to Lee Ann Chearney at Amaranth, without whose vision this book wouldn't have happened. And thanks to Douglas Rose for making

the connection, Michael Thomas Ford for all the time on the phone, and Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) for the music.

Special Thanks to the Illustrator

Warm thanks to graphic designer and computer whiz Kathleen Edwards for her inspired illustration work. Always professional, cheerful, pragmatic, and adventuresome, we count Kathy as a friend and invaluable talent.

Special Thanks on the Third Edition

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Wicca and Witchcraft, Third Edition, would not exist without the hard work, good sense, and good humor of Miria Liguana. Miria, a third-degree Wiccan priestess with more than 25 years of experience in the Craft, checked the current edition and helped us ensure that all the information inside is accurate and up to date.

A super special thanks to writer Nina Metzner, co-author with Miria Liguana of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Wicca Craft* (Alpha Books, 2004) and *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Natural Magick* (Alpha Books, 2006), for her insights and assistance on Chapters 1, 2, 7, and Appendix B.

And thanks again to Lee Ann Chearney at Amaranth Illuminare, all the folks at Alpha Books, and to you—our readers!

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Part 1

Wicca Wisdom

Wicca is one of the fastest-growing religions in the United States today. A faith practiced by many witches, Wicca honors the God and Goddess and gives reverence to the earth. Despite many misconceptions about Wiccans, witches, and their practices, Wicca and witchcraft have survived and are going strong. Let Wicca's wisdom connect you to the all, the source, and the profound beauty of living in tune with Nature.

Chapter 1

All About Wicca and Witchcraft

In This Chapter

- What is Wicca?
- Embracing your natural powers
- Living in harmony with Nature
- Witches are all around you!
- Wiccan beliefs
- Anyone can do magick

Chances are that witches have been part of your life from as far back as you can remember. These were the homely, wart-nosed crones who tried to turn children into a snack, poisoned apples, and imprisoned beautiful princesses. But the reality is that witches today are everywhere and look just like ordinary people. That's because they are! All it takes to be a practicing witch is a little knowledge, your good intentions, and the will to make it happen.

Through the practice of Wicca you can begin to find your inner power and learn to become a positive force in the world. This book can help you begin your exciting new spiritual journey.

Welcome to Wicca and Witchcraft

Wicca is a religion gaining popularity in the United States, although just how many practicing witches there are is uncertain. Because many people are still suspicious of witchcraft and because there is no controlling Wiccan body as there are with other religions, trying to get an exact number of Wiccans is difficult. What most sources agree on, however, is that Wicca is the fastest-growing religion in America, and the number of Wiccans is doubling every two years or so. Rest assured, becoming a witch will put you in very good company!

What exactly is Wicca? For now, let's just say that Wicca is an earth-based or nature-based religion founded on ancient beliefs. Wicca is a welcoming religion. Wiccans do not exclude anyone based on race, color, sex, age, national or cultural origin, or sexual preference. Not all Wiccans are *witches*, and not all witches are Wiccan, but a lot of them are. By the way, Wiccans don't use the word *warlock* to refer to male witches. Male witches are witches, too. A warlock is a person who has broken an oath, and because of that has been ostracized from the community.

def•i•ni•tion

Today the term **Wicca** refers to a religion that many (but not all) witches practice. Wicca is an Earth-based religion that honors both the God and the Goddess. The word **witch** comes from the Old English words *wicce*, which means "female witch," and *wicca*, meaning "wizard." A witch is someone who uses magick in his or her everyday life.

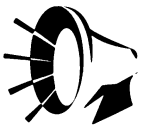
There are many different traditions in the Wiccan religion. We're going to talk mostly about Wiccan witches, and in this book we will use the terms *Wiccan* and *witch* interchangeably. We'll explain more about Wicca, witches, and their history in the sections and chapters that follow. So read on, have a great time learning about Wicca and witchcraft, and welcome home!

Supernatural Abilities?

Everybody has the ability to channel energy. We all have an inherent power within us to (1) take control of our own lives and (2) make things happen. Because many of us have been taught to always look to outside authorities, we have, to a large extent,

repressed this ability. Using energy, or powers, to control your life and make things happen is just as much a part of the natural world as getting up from your chair.

Some people see witches' abilities as greater than ordinary and call them "supernatural," but the forces that witches use are available to all of us and are, thus, ordinary. Witches use natural energies to enhance their lives and to heal and protect themselves, their loved ones, and the earth.



Banish!

Witchcraft can help improve your life, but you still must make responsible, moral choices. When you study witchcraft, you learn more about yourself, your needs, and your wants. That knowledge will help strengthen the inborn power you already have. But it also requires some pretty mundane efforts to make things happen.

... Or Super Abilities in the Natural?

A witch's powers may be super or, well, powerful, but they are natural. We're not talking about powers like the ones the three young witches possess on the TV show *Charmed*. Stopping time, moving objects with your mind, seeing black and white images of the future—those are powers conjured up by the writers' imaginations. We're talking about the natural powers you were born with. Once you start experimenting and practicing you'll begin to understand what that force is—and that the energy is in all of us. Just like Dorothy in the classic movie *The Wizard of Oz*, you'll realize that everything you need is already in your possession.

Dorothy's magickal ruby slippers.

When you learn to focus on your natural energy, you'll learn to increase it, channel it, and send it out into the world. Our natural energies make up our power, and we can use that power in the natural world to do natural things. Using your energy is not a substitute for mundane action, though. You still have to read the textbook, study for

the test, and concentrate in order to get that "A" you want. You may think of the word *mundane* as meaning boring, humdrum, or everyday. Certainly the word is often used that way. In this context, "mundane" means worldly, earth-bound, ordinary, real-life, and nonmagickal.

If you use your magickal energies, too, they may just help you stay clear-headed and focused. Powers are a special blessing that we all have. Some witches believe that their powers come from the Goddess (we'll discuss this later in the chapter). Wherever they come from, just know that you have them. If you open your heart and mind, you can use your powers. And the more you work with them the better, the more powerful, you become.

So Mote It Be

Learning about your magickal abilities is a process of self-discovery. One useful tool in such a process is a journal. Witches refer to their journals as their Book of Shadows (see Chapter 7). As you learn more about witchcraft, record your changing thoughts and feelings about yourself and the world around you. Remember your Book of Shadows is just for you—there are no rules to follow.

Embracing Our Energy

The abilities you have are natural and inborn, so there is no reason to be frightened of them. Some of us are more in tune with these innate energies and thus find them welcome tools to enhance our lives. Don't worry. You won't suddenly find that green sparks shoot out of your fingers every time you are annoyed. Your powers are *yours*. You will control them. You'll learn to respect your abilities and send them out to work for your own or someone else's benefit. Remember, your powers are not meant to be used as party entertainment. Enjoy them, but consider them sacred! Soon you will come to rely on them.

A Wiccan Challenge for Living in Today's World

Living close to Nature in your everyday life might seem like a challenge indeed! It can be especially challenging for witches who live in the cement and steel world of a big city. Lately, Nature has seemed determined to cause destruction and hard times as though the Goddess herself is angry with us. The tsunami in Asia, Hurricane Katrina, mudslides in California, droughts in the Midwest, floods in the Northeast—these natural occurrences make it hard to feel close to Nature. But witches know that Nature is never good or evil, it just *is*. We can't always see the big picture, but we can be assured the universe is unfolding as it should.

On the other hand, witches in the world today also have a responsibility to live fully aware that the earth is sacred and the source of our magick. If we don't treat it with respect and love, every careless act pushes us farther away from our natural energies. Witches in all walks of life, living in all climates, touching base with nature wherever they find themselves living can have a powerful impact on the way the earth is treated.

Wicca is often compared to Native American beliefs and traditions. Witches recognize that it is in our best interests to keep the earth healthy and vital. While many religions have a holy book, our book is the earth itself and all of her creatures. "Reading" this book makes the Goddess happy and empowers each of us.

What's a Good Witch to Do?

How can one witch make a difference? In all kinds of ways! Think about the impact you can have on the environment every single day. Recycle rather than filling up the landfills; walk or bicycle when you can rather than driving; use public transportation; never ever litter; conserve water when possible, letting nature decide when to water your lawn. And that's just the beginning!

Volunteer to work at your local animal shelter or offer to take your neighbors' bottles and cans to the recycling center. Plant a tree or clean up a local river or lake. These may sound as though they're not very magickal solutions, but taking care of the physical world makes you more powerful in the spiritual world. The Goddess and God will take notice and your spells will soar!

Finding Ways to Connect to Nature

If you live in the country or in a small town, connecting to Nature is a cinch. Take some time to enjoy Nature's sights and sounds every day. Take a walk, talk to a tree, lie on the grass, play in the rain or the snow. This doesn't sound very magickal either, does it? Where are the candles and the chants? We'll get to those, but first you have to strengthen your connection to the earth. In today's air-conditioned, heat-controlled world, it's easy to lose our natural connection to Nature. Take time to really focus on what the earth smells, feels, and sounds like when you step out of your house or apartment.

Webweaving

A fellow witch once found herself stuck in a big city, making it difficult for her to connect to Nature. She ended up adopting a wall on her walk to work. Every day she took time to look at the vines growing against the wall and the bugs that crawled over it. Once she had a chance to move, she actually missed her wall!

Making an effort to connect to the earth is especially important if you live among skyscrapers and parking garages. Really look around you. There are most likely parks in your city. You can still see the stars and the moon if you try. You can still hear the birds sing and watch squirrels at play. Feel Earth's energy pulsing through everything around you. This connection is the foundation of good witchcraft.

Who Can Be a Witch?

Anyone! You've probably met at least one witch in your life. Maybe more! Witches have all different kinds of jobs. Witches are schoolteachers, bus drivers, chefs, construction workers, computer programmers, actors, nurses, bankers, doctors, lawyers ... you name it. Witches are parents and even grandparents. Witches go bowling, play tennis, and attend baseball games.

When you first meet someone, do you ask that person what his or her religion is? You probably don't. In fact, in most cases, the subject rarely comes up. Usually you get few clues about a person's belief system from his or her outward appearance. So, because witches look just like everyone else, you probably have already met a witch without even realizing it. Witches not only look like everyone else, they are a lot *like* everyone else. Witches go shopping, drive cars, eat ice cream, pay taxes, and ultimately die, just like everyone else.

Webweaving

You can recognize some witches by the jewelry they wear. A teenage witch in a Detroit suburb was told that she could not wear her pentacle necklace to school. The American Civil Liberties Union argued in court that the prohibition violated her First Amendment rights under the U.S. Constitution. The court decided the school was wrong, and the teen returned to school wearing the symbol of her Wiccan faith.

What Do Witches Believe?

In the 1970s, the Council of American Witches, an organization that no longer exists, drew up a list of basic principles. We'll paraphrase them here to give you an idea of what they sound like (for more on witches' principles, see Chapter 5):

- We practice rites to attune ourselves with the natural rhythm of life forces.
- We recognize that our intelligence gives us a unique responsibility toward our environment.

- We acknowledge a depth of power far greater than is apparent to the average person.
- We conceive of the creative power in the universe as both masculine and feminine. We value neither gender above the other.
- We recognize both outer worlds and inner, psychological worlds, and we see in the interaction of these two dimensions the basis for paranormal and magickal exercises.
- We do not recognize any authoritarian hierarchy.
- We see religion, *magick*, and wisdom-in-living as being united in the way one views the world and lives in it.
- Calling oneself a "witch" does not make a witch, but neither does heredity itself, or the collecting of titles, degrees, and initiations. Witches seek to control the forces within themselves that make life possible in order to live wisely and well, without harm to others, and in harmony with Nature.
- We acknowledge that it is the affirmation and fulfillment of life, in a continuation of evolution and development of consciousness, that gives meaning to the universe we know, and to our personal role within it.

def•i•ni•tion

Is *magick* with a *k* different from *magic?* You bet. Both words come from the same root, meaning "to be able, to have power," but magic is what an entertainer does on stage—card tricks, making quarters disappear, sawing a hapless volunteer in half. **Magick** is the realm of witches and may include spells, healing, the harnessing of psychic forces, and even divination.

- Our only animosity toward Christianity, or toward any other religion or philosophy of life, is that its institutions have claimed to be "the one true, right, and only way" and have sought to deny freedom to others and to suppress other ways of religious practices and beliefs.
- We are not threatened by debates on the history of the Craft. We are concerned with our present and our future.
- We do not accept the concept of absolute evil, nor do we worship any entity known as "Satan" or "the devil" as defined by Christian traditions.
- We work within Nature for that which contributes to our health and well-being.

Basically, Wiccan witches try to live in harmony with Nature and take responsibility for the environment. Wiccans believe that the Goddess is in everything and is not some force standing "out there" watching us. In the faith of Wicca, we believe in one deity—the All. We divide that into a male spirituality and a female spirituality, the God and Goddess, or Lord and Lady. Neither the male nor the female is stronger, or better, or more important. Wiccans also work with the demigods, different, smaller aspects of the All. The All is so big that most witches find it helpful to visualize it in a more personally comprehensible form. For example, a witch might keep on his or her altar a statuette of the Venus of Willendorf. This Goddess, with her big hips and enormous, full breasts, is the epitome of fertility and motherhood, but at the same time is part of the All.

def•i•ni•tion

A **coven** is a group of witches who practice their religion together. *Coven* probably comes from the Middle English word *covent,* which means "a gathering." The English words *convent* and *convene* come from the same root.

Wiccans honor teachers and leaders, but do not recognize authoritarian hierarchies because no one is intrinsically better than anyone else. You can become a witch through solitary study, study with a family member who is a witch, or by joining a *coven* where you will be taught. (We'll tell you more about covens in Chapter 3.) Witches are not anti-Christian, nor do they harbor negative feelings about other religions.

Venus of Willendorf.

Wiccans believe in the morals that are common to most faiths. But Wiccans do not believe in the Christian concept of original sin. Wiccans live in the now. While some Wiccans believe in reincarnation, life is to be lived for what it is in the present so that we may learn from this lifetime on Earth. As Wiccans, we do not deny ourselves

pleasure or put up with unnecessary pain. We are not waiting for some reward that we will get only after we are dead. We enjoy life's pleasures so that we can learn what it means to be on this Earth and to be part of life on Earth. Wiccans believe that we all have a job to do, or a lesson to learn, or maybe a debt to pay from the last lifetime. Once we have succeeded in our mission, we must move on to the Summerland, where we can reflect and choose our mission in the next life.

We believe that we are put on Earth to live in harmony with Nature, never to abuse it. While Wiccans don't believe there is a hell to punish sinners, Wiccans do believe there is a universal law, called karma, that puts our behavior on display so that we can learn from it. Karma doesn't punish us; it operates like a feedback system and makes us think about our past actions.

Wiccans believe that people are basically good. A person's behavior might be unacceptable, but that person is not inherently bad. We are all made in the image of the Lord and Lady. Nobody is born evil. Some people may act that way or harbor those energies, but the evil or negativity is not inborn.

Webweaving

In 1986, a federal appeals court ruled that Wicca is a legal religion. That means that the practice of Wicca is protected by the U.S. Constitution. Ever since the ruling, more and more Wiccans have "come out of the broom closet."

Three Times Bad and Three Times Good

Witches know that whatever energy or actions they send out, whether they are negative or positive, will come back to them threefold. If you punch someone in the eye, that does not necessarily mean that you will get punched in the eye three times, but you may fall down the stairs and break your ankle. And that fall will be three times worse than the punch you sent out. You may get temporary pleasure out of ratting on someone at work, but in the end, you could be the one who loses your job even though you had more seniority. That's how karma works. The negativity might not come back to you right away, but it will come back. Usually it gets you at the most inopportune time. And hopefully you will remember what you did to deserve the payback and not repeat the same mistake!

If you send out positive energies, you will get positive energies in return. In this way, your life will continuously expand and improve. Think about the many ripples that tossing a pebble into a pond causes. Every positive ripple you send out has the potential to affect many, many people.

And If It Harms None, Do What You Will

Because there are many different types and traditions of witches, witches believe a variety of things. If you ask 200 witches a question, you will probably get 400 different answers. But there is one core belief common to all Wiccan witches that none will deviate from. This central principle is called the Wiccan *Rede*, and it is expressed, in somewhat archaic language, like this: "An it harm none, do what ye will." If you think about it, this statement covers many of the Christian Ten Commandments in one phrase.

def•i•ni•tion

Rede is an archaic word that means "advice" or "counsel." It can also refer to a narration or story. In this context, a rede is a good rule to live by!

Wiccan witches do think about the Rede and its implications. Just like Christians, Wiccans know it is wrong to kill, deliberately hurt, steal, or bear false witness. Because the Rede does not list all the things that you should avoid, you must take responsibility for living according to its rule.

"How can I cause the least harm?" This is a question that Wiccans ask themselves all the time (especially when doing magick). For some people, this may mean avoiding recreational drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes because these substances hurt the body and thus cause harm. Everyone agrees that inflicting pain on animals for fun is wrong. Wiccans believe strongly in the integrity and freedom of the animal kingdom. Some witches believe in vegetarianism, although it isn't a requirement. Wiccans who do eat meat give thanks to the animal that gave its life in order for others to eat. They don't wear furs for vanity or take an animal's life just to be able to hang a trophy on the wall. They try to cause the least harm to all living things in Nature.

In trying to cause the least harm, many Wiccans have become serious environmentalists. Wiccans recycle and pick up trash on the street. Some Wiccans compost their food scraps or put them out for animals to eat instead of adding them to large landfill projects. For others it means buying only organic produce—fruit and vegetables that have been raised in such a way as to cause the least harm to the earth and its inhabitants.

We'll discuss the Wiccan Rede in more detail in Chapter 5.

Witches Do Believe in God

Wiccans hold the complete pure energy of the All, of the God and Goddess, most high. When you get to know a witch, you will see that witches have a great reverence for life. If, for example, a witch cuts a branch from a tree, the next action is to give

something back to the tree—some compost or leaf mold to help nourish the tree in its continued growth. When witches harvest a plant, they try to do it in such a way that is the least harmful to the plant. A lot of the organizations that help animals are made up of Wiccans. Because Wicca is a Nature religion, Wiccans see the Goddess in everything. Wiccans not only see the Goddess in everything, but Wiccans honor the Goddess in everything by living in harmony with Nature.

Witches Don't Believe in Satan!

The idea that witches worship Satan is one of the most common misconceptions about witches. This mistaken idea probably developed hundreds of years ago because some Christian leaders encouraged their followers to view non-Christians as anti-Christian. If you weren't a believer in Christ, the embodiment of the good, you *must* be a believer in his evil opposite—Satan or the devil. The all-evil Satan is a Christian concept that plays no part in the Wiccan religion.

Witches do not believe that negativity or evil is an organized force. Most of the time, negative beings act simply out of self-interest to affect their own personal gain; therefore, they're more like independent contractors. Neither do Wiccans believe there is a place (hell) where the damned or the evil languish and suffer. And as we said earlier, witches do not try to gain power through the suffering or misfortune of others.

Are You Ready for Magick?

We all have the ability within ourselves to do magick. We all do magick every day of our lives without even realizing it.

Have you ever ...

- Said a little chant to find a parking place and then, *voilà*, a space appeared right in front of the building you had to visit?
- Made soup for a sick friend or relative to help make that person feel better?
- Worn a lucky outfit for a job interview or a sports competition?
- Thrown salt over your shoulder or knocked on wood to prevent a bad thing from happening?

Every time you ask for that parking place and get it and every time you make your special chicken soup to help cure someone, you perform magick. When you make that soup, you add your own special ingredients. (We know you've got your own trademarked recipe!) And you put in your own loving energy and hope that your friend or child or uncle will feel better. The sick person eats the soup and feels better. That is magick.

Your lucky outfit is magick, too. Maybe it just gives you confidence, you say. Well, perhaps confidence is all it is, but maybe there is something magickal about that, too! Every time you engage in a "superstition," throwing salt over your shoulder or knocking on wood, you are invoking part of an old belief system that predates Christianity. You're using magick.

Performing magick makes you feel good. It's a healthy form of self-expression because the magick in witchcraft comes from the power that is already within you.

If you are ready to make your life better, to take control of yourself, to empower yourself, to explore who you are and who you want to be, if you are ready to look at the world in a new and different light, then you are ready for magick.

The Least You Need to Know

- Wicca is a recognized and legitimate religion with hundreds of thousands of people, women *and* men, practicing Wicca in the United States today.
- Witches do believe in the pure energy of the All, the union of masculine and feminine energy. Witches *don't* believe in the Christian concept of Satan.
- Witches are everywhere. You probably already know at least one witch!
- Witches are not inherently good or bad but, just like all other human beings on Earth, must choose how they will use their powers for the benefit of themselves and others.
- According to the Wiccan concept of karma, whatever you do, good or bad, comes back to you threefold.
- If you remember nothing else, remember this basic tenet of the Wiccan Rede—harm none, and do what ye will.

Chapter 2

The History of Wicca and Witchcraft

In This Chapter

- Before Wicca and witchcraft
- The Burning Times
- Survival and reconstruction of the Wiccan religion
- Wicca now and into the future

You probably already have a sense of some of the history of Wicca and witchcraft. As a kid, you may have read novels such as *The Witch of Blackberry Pond* or the play *The Crucible.* Maybe you even starred in your high school's production of *The Crucible.* Or you may have visited Salem, Massachusetts, the town whose name has practically become synonymous with "witchcraft."

Some of what you have gleaned about the history of witchcraft is not pretty—accusations, trials, torture, imprisonment, and burnings at the stake. But how did witchcraft start? What really happened? Why did it happen? And where does all this history leave the modern witch today?

Searching the Spirit of Each Thing

Before Christianity, before the Roman and Greek empires and their pantheons of deities, before recorded history, people honored the spirit of each thing—trees, grass, plants, animals, rivers, and streams. The spirits of the wind, rain, Sun, and Moon also were important.

Paleolithic Gods and Goddesses

All over Europe, anthropologists have found small, carved female figures that date from the Paleolithic period, more than 20,000 years ago. These figures are generally referred to as Venus figures. The Venus of Willendorf is a particularly famous example. She has a super-curvy figure—large breasts, a round belly, and a generous behind. Scholars believe that she represented fertility, or life-giving powers, to prehistoric societies. Go back to Chapter 1 and take another look at the picture of the *Venus of Willendorf.*

Webweaving

In 1908, the limestone statuette that has come to be known as the *Venus of Willendorf* it was found in a cave near what is now Vienna, Austria. Archaeologists believe that the 4⅜-inch-high figure comes from the period between 24000 and 22000 B.C.E. When found, she bore traces of a red ochre pigment thought to represent menstrual blood. Similar statuettes have been found in a large area of Europe—from western France to western Russia. The *Venus of Willendorf* has become an icon of prehistoric art.

Cave paintings from around the same period depict animals, people, and a half-man, half-animal figure with horns that some anthropologists have come to call the God of the Hunt. But no one is really sure if this figure did represent a God. Many of the writers who have written on this subject had an ax to grind—they wanted to prove that men have always been dominant over women. On the other hand, more recent feminist writers have tried to prove just the opposite. Much of the evidence left by these early societies indicates that they worshipped the life-giving potential of women and the earth.

Nurturing a Fertile World: The Rise of Ritual

A few ancient cave paintings seem to depict religious *rituals*, with people dancing in what look like animal costumes. Anthropologists believe these prehistoric people used rituals, such as dancing or creating paintings, to encourage animals to multiply and plants to grow.

But are rituals just confined to the distant past or strange sects? Actually, there are lots of common rituals in modern life.

def•i•ni•tion

The word **ritual** describes the order or form of a religious ceremony or any detailed procedure regularly followed. A ritual is a ceremonial set of actions usually repeated in the same way over time to produce a desired effect—union with the divine or the state of consciousness necessary to perform magick.

For example, have you ever ...

- Attended a wedding, graduation, or funeral?
- Put candles on a cake and sung "Happy Birthday" to a friend?
- Rang a neighbor's doorbell while dressed in a costume and greeted your neighbor with the words "trick or treat"?
- Said a prayer or blessing before a meal?
- Wished on a star by saying the rhyme, "Star light, star bright, first star I've seen tonight, wish I may, wish I might have the wish I wish tonight"?

So you have participated in rituals! As you can see from this list, rituals can be quite varied. Some are solemn and serious, others less so. And some are just downright fun. The purpose of rituals varies, as well. Anthropologists believe that the focus of rituals in early societies was on fertility—of humans, animals, and the earth herself.

Throughout prehistory, as rituals developed and became more complex, individuals emerged as ritual leaders. These people, the shamans, not only led rituals, but they also held knowledge of the nonphysical world.

By 350 B.C.E., the Celts, an ancient people of western and central Europe, had developed a priestly class—the Druids. Like the shamans, Druids knew about the nonphysical world. But the Druids had refined their knowledge. There were Druid healers and midwives, and specialists in ritual, weather, law, and astrology. Druids were even said to be able to see into the future. Many people trace the origins of Wicca back to the Druids and their magickal knowledge. Unfortunately, as the Roman Empire grew, the number of Druids dwindled.

Of Popes and Pagans

In 371 C.E., the Roman Empire adopted Christianity as the official state religion. Roman soldiers spread the official state religion and their interpretation of it wherever they went. Often this meant killing the priests of the local religion; this slaughter included the Druids. The Christian church gained in religious, political, and economic power.

From Gregory to Innocent: Papal Bull

Pope Gregory I (540–604), also known as "the Great," is credited as being one of the major forces in consolidating the power of the church and Christianizing Europe. How did he do it? He had 10,000 people baptized in England alone. He also had churches built on the sites of *pagan* temples. He reasoned that the people would continue to gather at those spots. But instead of worshipping their old deities, they would be led in prayer by one of his priests. In many areas, people developed a hybrid religion—in outward appearance they were Christians, but deep down they still believed in the old faith. You can see this phenomenon functioning today in many parts of the world in the cult of the Virgin Mary. For example, in Europe many churches dedicated to her are called "Our Lady," another name for the Goddess.

def•i•ni•tion

The English word **pagan** is defined as someone who observes a polytheistic religion—a religion that has many Gods. It is also defined as a person who has no religion. It was used to describe anyone who was not Christian. This word comes from the late Latin word that means "civilian," which in turn comes from the Latin word *paganus*, meaning "country dweller." So the word *pagan* really doesn't carry any negative connotation at all.

After Gregory's death, the pope and the Catholic church continued to gain power. But a series of different popes worried about the various types of Christianity that were sprouting up. To keep changes in church doctrine in check, they employed inquisitors, men who hunted down and imprisoned heretics, Christians whose beliefs or practices varied from what the church prescribed. Some heretics were even put to death. Because of the inquisitions, more and more people became Christians—or said that they were Christians.

In 1484, Pope Innocent VIII wrote a bull, or letter, about witches that was reproduced and spread far and wide. In this bull, the pope complained that no one was taking the threat posed by witches seriously enough. He insisted that everyone help his inquisitors find witches, and threatened anyone who stood in the way. Some of the people convicted under Pope Innocent's bull may have been practicing witches—wise men and women who had preserved some of the knowledge of the Druids, old pagan practices, and folk beliefs—and some of them probably were not. A few of the suspected witches were accused merely because they kept cats. Cats were thought to be demons that the devil gave to witches to act as advisers and messengers.

Monk Madness: *Malleus Malleficarum*

Pope Innocent's bull paved the way for Heinrich Kramer and Jakob Sprenger to publish the *Malleus Malleficarum*, or the *Witches' Hammer*, a witch-hunter's manual. In fact, Kramer and Sprenger, German monks who held the jobs of inquisitors under Pope Innocent VIII, used the papal bull as the introduction to their book. The book, which is divided into three parts, came out in 1486 and is credited with starting the mass hysteria of witch persecutions across Europe.

The first part of the *Malleus Malleficarum* explains how dangerous witches are and that not believing in witches is heresy, or against church teachings. In the second part of the book, the monks list the types of witches and how their evildoings, which include sexual relations with the devil and the ability to fly, can be counteracted. Finally, the monks demonstrate how to legally try and convict people of witchcraft. They even suggest how best to "test," or torture, a witch to make suspected witches confess.

Banish!

Avoid using information about the persecution of witches to fuel hatred of other religions such as the Catholic church. Yes, bad things happened in the past, but harboring animosity won't help you or anyone else. Remember in the last chapter the list of basic principles drawn up by the Council of American Witches? One of the points on that list reads, "Our only animosity toward Christianity, or toward any other religion or philosophy of life, is that its institutions have claimed to be 'the one true, right, and only way' and have sought to deny freedom to others and to suppress other ways of religious practices and beliefs." Another good point from that document: "We are concerned with our present and our future." So look ahead and avoid dwelling on the past.

Pope Innocent's bull and the *Malleus Malleficarum* led to the deaths of many people across Europe. Probably three quarters of the people put to death were women. The monks thought that women were more likely to become witches because they are more susceptible to the influence of demons. Witches today refer to that horrible period of history as the Burning Times. Some scholars estimate that 50,000 people were killed in Europe during the Burning Times. Other people place the number as high as nine million. No one knows for sure how many people were hung, burned at the stake, or died as a result of the tests they endured.

Enduring and Surviving the Crucible

Despite persecution, witches and their beliefs survived the *crucible*, or severe trial of the Inquisition and the Middle Ages, although the trouble was far from over. Repression continued into the seventeenth century, but it was less widespread.

King James I's Witchcraft Act, 1604

In 1604, King James I of England, the same guy whose name is on English translations of the Bible, passed his Witchcraft Act. Under this act, the punishment for using witchcraft became hanging. Previously in England, this crime entailed one year in jail. This act also associated witches with the devil and made any act of consorting with the devil a crime punishable by death. But James went one step further. He actually is said to have changed the Bible. Where the text once read, "Thou shalt not suffer a poisoner to live," in his translation it says, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."

def•i•ni•tion

A **crucible** is a container made to heat metal at high temperatures. As such, it is extremely tough and durable. A crucible is also defined as a severe test or trial. The Burning Times certainly were a crucible for witches and for anyone suspected of witchcraft.

By the end of his reign, King James I had changed his mind about witches. After talking to a number of witnesses who admitted they had given false testimony and faked the physical ailments the accused witches had caused them, James I decided that witchcraft didn't exist. Despite the change in his views, the law he had enacted remained in effect after his death in 1625.

The English witch trials of 1612, 1616, 1633, 1645, and 1649 were all prosecuted under this act, which was finally repealed in 1736.

Salem, 1692

In 1692, America was still a British colony, and so lived under British laws. King James I's Witchcraft Act of 1604 was used to prosecute the individuals accused of witchcraft in Salem, Massachusetts.

You may be familiar with the story of the Salem trials from Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible*. Keep in mind that the play is a work of art, not history, and that Miller took many liberties with the actual facts. (For more on this subject, see Margo Burns's website: www.17thc.us/, or visit www.nationalgeographic.com/salem/.) For those of you who don't know the story of the Salem trials, several girls and young women, ranging in age from 9 to 20, started accusing certain citizens of Salem and nearby Salem Village of bewitching them. The accusers had fits during which they cried out in pain, as if being pinched or strangled. Sometimes they were violent and disrespectful. The first four people they accused of tormenting them were a female slave; a poor woman; a widowed, disabled woman; and the mother of an illegitimate, mixed-race child. In other words, they picked on the community scapegoats. But soon more accusations flew.

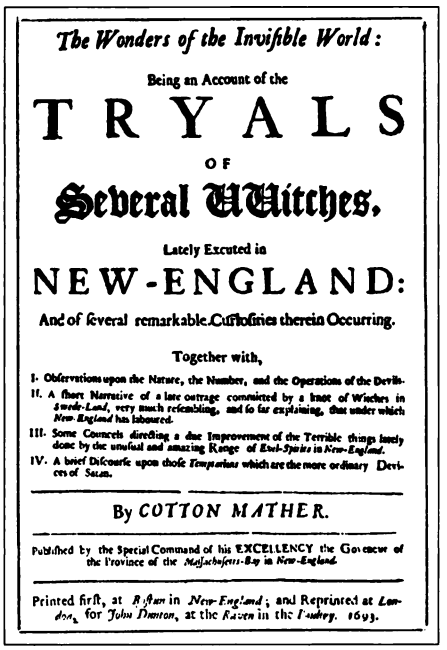
Webweaving

As the witch hysteria swept out of Salem and consumed other New England communities, the accusations got wilder and wilder. In Andover, Massachusetts, the son of a former governor of the state was accused of causing a dog to afflict the witch-hunting young women. The young man was indicted but eventually released. The dog was tried for witchcraft and hanged.

Eventually, devout Christians and pillars of the Puritan community in Salem and the neighboring towns stood accused. Two of the accusers admitted that they had made up their stories—that, in fact, no one had tormented them. The group of accusers turned on these two young women and accused them. Soon the group of accusers traveled to neighboring towns to ferret out the "witches" in those communities. The accused soon began to accuse others in turn; those who named names were considered cooperative and were treated leniently by the court.

By the time the Salem witch scare was over, almost 150 people had been arrested and 31 people tried. Eventually, 19 people, 13 of them women, were hanged, and 1 old man was crushed to death with rocks. The five women who confessed to witchcraft at their trials were given reprieves. An additional two people died in jail. Fourteen years after the trials, Ann Putnam, the youngest accuser, admitted that the people she had accused were innocent.

A title page from Cotton Mather's famous pamphlet account of the New England witch-hunt trials, reprinted from the Boston edition for John Dunton, London, in 1693.



The Wonders of the Invisible World:

Being an Account of the

TRYALS

OF

Several Witches,

Lately Excuted in

NEW-ENGLAND:

And of several remarkable Curiosities therein Occurring.

Together with,

I. Observations upon the Nature, the Number, and the Operations of the Devils.

II. A short Narrative of a late outrage committed by a knot of Witches in *Swede-Land*, very much resembling, and so far explaining, that under which *New-England* has laboured.

III. Some Counsels directing a due Improvement of the Terrible things lately done by the unusual and amazing Range of *Evil-Spirits* in *New-England*.

IV. A brief Discourse upon those *Temptations* which are the more ordinary Devices of Satan.

By COTTON MATHER.

Published by the Special Command of his EXCELLENCY the Governour of the Province of the *Massachusetts-Bay* in *New-England*.

Printed first, at *Boston* in *New-England*; and Reprinted at *London*, for *John Dunton*, at the *Raven* in the *Poultry*. 1693.

Meeting in the Shadows and Emerging Into the Light

The terror that had engulfed Europe and New England simmered down, and the last execution for witchcraft took place in Poland in 1793. But neither the faith nor the magick died out completely. Practitioners of witchcraft stayed hidden in the shadows and kept their knowledge and powers secret.

Solitary Pursuits

Although witches continued to hand down their wisdom to succeeding generations, most people believed witchcraft was dead. The practice of paganism or the Old Religion survived in pockets, particularly in the countryside. Covens—groups of witches—still worshipped together, but they did so cut off from interaction with witches from other areas. During this time, a number of covens and individual witches started to keep written records of their practices. Because witches were so isolated from one another, information that used to be passed down orally was recorded in a Book of Shadows—a book that contains a witch's spells and lists of magickal information.

The Crucible as a Metaphor for Persecution

In 1951, the English Parliament repealed its surviving laws against witchcraft. Two years later, Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* was a hit on Broadway. Historically and culturally, this was a turning point for witches. Not only did witchcraft reemerge into public discussion, but the *witch-hunts* were seen for what they were—persecution for no good reason. Arthur Miller's play, as everyone at the time was aware, is not so much about witchcraft as it is about the McCarthy hearings, when Communists were the hunted. The fact that Miller was able to use the Salem trials as a metaphor surely indicates that the tide of irrational hatred against witches was beginning to turn.

In 1954, Gerald Gardner published his *Witchcraft Today*. In this book Gardner, an English witch, comes out of the broom closet and describes the existence of the Craft in the twentieth century. Gardner, a long-time student of religion and magick, believed that information handed down in his coven's Book of Shadows was inaccurate and incomplete. To remedy this situation, he did a lot of research and rewrote rituals and chants. Through these actions, he became the figurehead of the Gardnerian tradition of witchcraft. Some people see him as the founder of modern-day Wicca.

def•i•ni•tion

The phrase **witch-hunt** has come to describe a political campaign with the professed purpose of investigating activities that are "subversive" to the state, when the individuals involved are not actually engaged in any such behavior. And in fact, many witches were hunted for political reasons, too.

Other witches began to come forward. Among them was Raymond Buckland, a student of Gardner's who went on to found the Seax-Wica tradition in 1973 and who has written numerous books about the Craft.

A Return to the Natural

In 1979, National Public Radio reporter Margot Adler published her *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America Today.* That same year, *The Spiral Dance*, author Starhawk's best-selling book, came out. Both books have introduced thousands and thousands of people to Wicca, Goddess worship, and modern paganism. The number of books about Wicca and witchcraft continues to grow as the number of people interested in these topics increases. For more books on these subjects, see Appendix A.

So Mote It Be

To increase tolerance in yourself and people around you, try saying this:

With open heart and open mind,
I embrace the world.
In perfect love and perfect trust,
I embrace the world.
Let all who I encounter
Grant me the same accord.
May we see only friends
In the faces that we pass.
Cast off dark thoughts
And walk into the light.
This is my will.
So mote it be.

Add more power to this spell by buying a seedling plant. Nurture it, water it, and read it these words. As the plant grows, so will the tolerance around and within you.

Wiccans and witches can now practice their faith in the open. A 1986 Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling reaffirmed that Wicca is a religion deserving First Amendment protection. Since that time, Wicca has received recognition from the United States Internal Revenue Service and has tax-exempt status as a legal religion. In the Netherlands, students of Wicca are allowed to write off the cost of schooling on their Dutch tax returns!

And just in case witches do encounter discrimination, there are organizations around the globe to help. In 1986, Laurie Cabot founded the Witches' League for Public Awareness. The Witches' Anti-Discrimination Lobby (now known as the Alternative Religious Education Network), the Earth Religions Assistance List, and several other organizations also are active on the behalf of witches. The American Civil Liberties Union, too, has come to the legal aid of witches, successfully arguing in court in 1999 that a Wiccan high school student should be allowed to wear the symbol of her faith, a pentacle necklace, to school, as we mentioned in the previous chapter.

Still, it's often prudent not to openly broadcast your status as a witch. Spirituality is, after all, a personal affair. If friends are curious, answer their questions honestly but stress the positive aspects of your religion: Harm none; live as though the Earth and all of its inhabitants are sacred; strive toward the positive. You will find doubters, but there is no need to turn them into enemies. Your exemplary behavior toward others might just turn some skeptics into believers.

Wicca and the World We Live In

On the cultural front, people of all faiths and opinions seem to be embracing the natural knowledge that is at the heart of the Wiccan religion. Concern about the environment and the future of our planet is widespread. And people are acting on these issues by recycling and buying recycled goods, by living more simply and focusing less on the material, consumer aspects of modern-day life. The increased interest in spiritual and New Age topics has led many people to explore Wicca and witchcraft, and even if these people don't become witches, they are incorporating many aspects of the faith into their lives.

Humans appear to be undergoing an evolution of the psyche, searching for ways to live spiritually, in tune with Nature, and in harmony with one another. Many individuals are concerned about the divisive nature of some institutionalized religions that preach that they and only they hold the one true path, and that all other faiths are evil and misguided. Wiccans, in contrast, believe that all positive spiritual paths lead to the same house—union with the divine. Perhaps, in our search for tolerance, harmony, peace, and freedom of spirit, by the end of this millennium all the major religions will have broken down and merged together into one gentle and magickal Earth-centered faith.

The Least You Need to Know

- Humankind has worshipped Goddesses since before recorded history.
- Many, many people were killed during the Burning Times, most of them women. Some of them were witches, and some of them probably were not.
- Witchcraft reemerged in the 1950s and has been gaining in popularity ever since.
- In the United States today, witches have rights. Since 1986, Wicca has been recognized as a legal religion, and the constitutional rights of all Wiccans are protected.

Chapter 3

Practicing Wicca and Witchcraft Today

In This Chapter

- What kind of witch are you?
- One witch, alone
- The coven experience
- Teach yourself or be taught

Many, many people practice Wicca and witchcraft, and you can be among them. Witches practice in a variety of traditions and follow various teachers. In this chapter, we'll tell you about the different traditions and talk about solitary witches—witches who practice alone—and those who join covens.

As you read, you may get ideas about the kind of witch you want to be. We'll give you some tips about learning more and finding a coven or a teacher. Whatever you decide to do, you'll want to do additional reading and research before you make any type of commitment.

Starting Your Practice of Wicca and Witchcraft

Beginning anything new can be scary. But isn't some of that jittery feeling excitement? We think so! If you do feel nervous, take it slow. Read through this book and read some others. You don't have to rush right out and find a teacher or a coven. Remember, this is *your* practice of Wicca and witchcraft. So do it your way. Explore. Have fun. Do what feels right for you.

All Kinds of Witches

Just as there are many different denominations of Christians, there are various kinds of witches. Some witches practice rituals in covens. Some follow a prescribed set of traditions, while others work alone and make up their own rituals. Some witches draw elements of their practice from a number of different traditions. And some witches find their traditions within their own families.

The Witches' Coven

Simply put, a coven is a working group of witches. Covens usually have one or two leaders who are known as the High Priestess or High Priest. The number of witches in a coven runs between 3 and 20. Some covens keep their membership to 13 or fewer because 13 people is the largest number you can comfortably accommodate in a 9-foot circle—a size that is considered traditional by some witches. Covens perform magick together and engage in religious rituals, according to the tradition that they follow. Every coven is autonomous, so each coven gets to make its own decisions.

Some people believe that the coven was an invention of the Inquisition. Because the inquisitors saw witchcraft as a parody of Christianity, they decided that witches must be organized in the same way that Christian monks were. At the time, monks were grouped into "convents" of 13 in honor of Christ and the 12 apostles. Other people believe that witches have worked in covens since time immemorial. Either way, modern covens do exist, and they work!

The Traditions of the Craft

Witches follow a variety of traditions, or practices. Here are descriptions of some of the different kinds:

- **Gardnerian Wicca.** In the 1950s, after England repealed its witchcraft laws, Gerald Gardner went public about his practice of witchcraft. He rewrote the rituals of the coven he belonged to so they would be more accurate. Gardnerian covens have a degree system in which one learns about the Craft. Individuals must be initiated by the coven and cannot initiate themselves through self-study. Gardnerian covens *work skyclad.* In addition, some try to have equal numbers of men and women in the group.

def•i•ni•tion

Skyclad literally means "clothed by the sky." Yup, you got it—in your birthday suit. Buck naked. To **work skyclad** means to work naked.

- **Alexandrian Wicca.** Alex Sanders founded this tradition in the 1960s. Originally based in England, practitioners work skyclad and much of their ritual is similar to Gardnerian practices, although the Alexandrians place more emphasis on ceremonial magick. Sanders called himself the "king" of his witches.
- **Georgian Wicca.** George Patterson founded the Georgian tradition in Bakersfield, California, in 1970. The followers of Georgian Wicca also are known as the Georgian church. Their rituals are drawn from Gardnerian and Alexandrian traditions, with other elements added as the coven members see fit. In fact, in some covens members write their own rituals. Some Georgian covens work skyclad, and some do not.
- **Seax-Wica.** In 1962, Raymond Buckland, a protégé of Gerald Gardner, moved to the United States, where he founded this tradition. Buckland taught the Gardnerian tradition for a number of years. Because of problems that he saw in the practice of the Craft, he started his own tradition in 1973. Seax-Wica is based on Saxon traditions, but as Buckland admits, he made it up alone. Covens decide for themselves if they will work skyclad or robed. Witches of this tradition can be initiated by the coven or through self-study.
- **Feri.** There are a number of ways to spell the name of this tradition; you'll also see Fairy, Faery, and Faerie. Victor Anderson is credited with bringing the Feri tradition to the United States, where he has taught in the San Francisco area since the late 1960s. Feri teachers tend to add something of their own when they teach, so there is a strain of eclecticism in this tradition. Feris are usually solitary, or they work in small groups.
- **Reclaiming.** Starhawk, the popular author of *The Spiral Dance*, received her training in the Feri tradition from Victor Anderson. In 1980, she and some of the women in her coven went on to co-found the Reclaiming Collective.

Reclaiming focuses on linking spirituality and magick with political activism. The teachings of the tradition, which is nonhierarchical, have spread from the San Francisco Bay area and are disseminated by individual teachers and at witch camps, weeklong programs that are offered in the United States, Canada, England, and Germany.

- **Dianic.** The Dianic tradition focuses on the Goddess with little talk about a God. The Goddess is worshipped in her three aspects—Maiden, Mother, and Crone. There are different varieties of Dianic witches. Since the 1970s, the Dianic Tradition has been seen as the feminist movement of the Craft. Some, but not all, Dianic covens are women only.
- **British Traditional.** There are a number of different British traditions, all of which are based on what people believe to be the pre-Christian practices of England. Many British Traditional groups follow Janet and Stewart Farrar, who have written a number of influential books about witchcraft. The groups tend to be structured, with training for neophytes (beginners) following a degree program under the supervision of the coven. Their practices are said to be a mix of Celtic and Gardnerian traditions.
- **Celtic Wicca.** This tradition looks to ancient Celtic and Druidic deities and beliefs with an emphasis on the magickal and healing powers of plants, minerals, gnomes, fairies, and Elemental spirits. Some of the rituals are derived from Gardnerian practice.
- **Strega Witches.** This type of witch follows traditions from Italy sometimes known as *La Vecchia Religione* (The Old Religion). Some people trace *Strega* teachings back to a woman named Aradia in the fourteenth century. The Strega tradition is rapidly gaining popularity in the United States today.
- **Black Forest Clan.** The clan practices a tradition known as Euro-witchcraft, which includes the Caledonii Tradition of Druidic Wicca, Gardnerian, German, and Celtic witchcraft. This is a lineage that includes Gerald Gardner, Raymond Buckland, Lord Serphant, Silver RavenWolf, and Pow-Wow practitioners such as Gertie Guise and Preston Zerbie. Training in this tradition prepares one as a licensed member of the clergy. The High Priests and High Priestesses do not hive off. Instead, they multiply by forming new covens while remaining part of their original coven. This makes the clan both strong in numbers and in unity.

def•i•ni•tion

Strega means "witch" in Italian, and the Italian word for witchcraft is **streoneria**. Remember Tomie dePaola's popular series of children's books about Strega Nona? That's Grandma Witch to you!

This list, of course, is not complete. There are many other forms of witch religions, and new ones are created frequently. Some of the different traditions are based on a particular national heritage. If you meet a Strega, there's a good chance that she'll be from an Italian background. But this does not mean that only individuals with Italian heritage can learn the Strega teachings. If you are drawn to a tradition, explore that tradition, whatever your background.

Solitaire

A solitaire, or solitary witch, can practice witchcraft in a variety of traditions or in no particular tradition. As solitaires, these witches can design a system of worship that works best for them. Some traditions—Gardnerian and Alexandrian, for example—say that a witch must be part of a coven to really be a witch. Some people believe that most witches throughout history have been solitaires. Others see this as a more recent development in the Craft.

The proliferation of books and websites about witchcraft has led to a rise in the numbers of solitary witches. In the past, before so much information about witchcraft was available, people seeking knowledge about the traditions had to find a coven or an individual witch to teach them. Now, all the neophyte needs to do is head to the local metaphysical bookstore or log on to the Internet! Solitaires act and learn on their own. To some this might seem lonely. To others it means great freedom and personal empowerment.

The Hereditary Witch

Hereditary witches inherit the Craft from older relatives who teach the family traditions. Some people believe that the traditions passed down within families represent an unbroken chain of beliefs and traditions that date back to the Old Religion of prehistory. Other people are sure that, while some family traditions can be very old, the forms of their practice are relatively recent. In rare cases, a hereditary witch might adopt someone from outside the family and teach that person the family Craft.

Webweaving

The witches portrayed in entertainment media often are hereditary witches. Sabrina of *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* is a hereditary witch, as are the characters played by Nicole Kidman in the movies *Practical Magic* and *Bewitched*. And, of course, Samantha Stevens from the original *Bewitched* was a hereditary witch, too.

Solitaire or Coven Life?

Choosing between becoming a solitary witch or joining a coven can be a tough decision. Denise originally became involved in the Craft as a solitaire. She read books and took a Wicca 101 course. While taking the course, she hooked up with a local coven. She had been in the coven for six months when she realized their energies and her energies did not mix. She left the coven, returned to a solitary practice, and buckled down. She got serious and read everything she could. Despite her seriousness, she felt there was something missing. Seeking answers, she wrote to an up-and-coming Wiccan author, Silver RavenWolf. Silver wrote back: "Turn it over to the Goddess, for she always has a plan." And what a plan it was! Some years later Denise opened a metaphysical bookshop, joined Silver's coven, and became the expert author of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Wicca and Witchcraft.* Now Denise is a third-degree High Priestess with her own coven, the Coven of the Blue Crab.

In making your own decision about joining a coven or practicing as a solitaire, you'll want to keep a number of factors in mind. What kind of witch do you want to be? Do you live in an area where there are covens? Are there covens of the tradition that appeals to you? Do you feel comfortable in a group? Do you have the time to commit to coven activities? These are important questions. But let's examine the issues more closely.

Pros and Cons of Coven Life

In a coven, you get support and companionship and have people available from whom to learn the Craft. You also get a schedule and a plan for how to learn. Many witches feel that the synergy of working with a group is important, particularly when working magick. Within the coven structure, you can study for higher degrees, eventually attaining the rank of High Priestess (or Priest). The teachings of a coven have been handed down through a lineage—which is important to some people.

The structure in a coven can be a con for some people. The coven will make decisions about meeting times and attendance that might not fit your schedule. Covens have certain expectations of each and every member that you may not be comfortable with. Many covens have dress (or undress!) requirements that you might not like. The other members of the coven will hold you accountable for keeping the laws of the tradition.

If you break the laws, your coven can oust you. If you leave the coven and its tradition and go to another tradition, you may have to start your training all over again.

Finally, as a member of the coven, you will be spending time with a group of people. If you don't like a member, you will probably be uncomfortable. Basically, the cons to coven life are pretty similar to the cons that come with any group activity.

Pros and Cons of Going Solo

As a solitary witch you can learn at your own pace. As a solitaire you don't have to worry about earning degrees and can follow your own schedule. You can wear whatever you want during rituals—street clothes, robes, or nothing at all. As a solitary witch, you can keep company with whomever you choose and do not have a set group you must associate with. As a solitaire, you can take on students when you want, if you want, and when you feel you are ready. Many solitaires design their own rituals.

The downside of going solo is that you are on your own. Help and guidance from knowledgeable witches are not going to be as available as they would be in a coven. As a solitaire, if you want the companionship of other witches, you'll have to seek it out. Some witches harbor prejudice against solitary witches, believing that you are only a true witch if you have been initiated by a coven. Because you don't earn degrees as a solitary witch, sometimes other witches won't recognize your level of proficiency in the Craft. If you do join a coven, no matter how many years of solitary experience you have, you may have to start again as a neophyte. Finally, as a solitary witch you have no lineage that you can look to for guidance.

Banish!

Resist the temptation to become dedicated to the first coven that you visit. Be sure that you make an educated decision. Be aware of all the resources available in your community before you commit. Are a few of your friends really gung ho about a certain tradition or group? Don't let them pressure you. Make sure your decision really feels right to you!

Neophyte Witch Seeks Training!

The kind of training you look for will depend on what kind of witch you want to be. But the first step is to discover what's out there. Visit your local metaphysical bookshop. Check out the books and take a good look at the store's bulletin board, too; stores often display interesting advertisements and announcements. And scope out their newsstand. Try to attend a pagan festival in your area. There you will get a taste of what it's like to work in a group, and you'll probably meet people who share your

interests. You may even find information about a local coven. Perhaps the coven will be practicing an open ritual that you can attend. And use the Internet. There's a lot of information on the web. Your first step, though, will be to read, read, read, and read some more! If you're still having trouble determining your path, why not do what Denise did? Turn it over to the Goddess, and see where she leads you.

Training in a Coven

What actually happens in a coven? Perhaps you have heard stories about scary rites or mandatory sexual performances. Let us dispel the myths. Read on!

Dedicated to the Craft

Each coven is different, but the process usually follows these general lines.

After you have told the coven you are interested in joining, they invite you to attend their open rituals. If a coven approaches you and asks you to join, steer clear. A good coven will not ask you—witches do not try to convert people to their religion. When you visit the coven's open circle, you get to check out the coven, and they get to check you out. After a few visits, if all goes well, you tell the coven members that you still want to join. The coven meets and decides if they want you as a dedicant, or a witch in training. (In all likelihood, if you are under 18 years old and do not have your parents' support, the coven will not take you. But never fear! You can still continue to learn as a solitaire, read as much as you can, and when you are of age you can begin your formal training.) Then, in many covens, someone agrees to be your teacher. As a dedicant, you study the Craft for a year and a day before earning your First Degree Initiation and acceptance into the coven as a member. Witches study for a year and a day because the Celtic goddess Cerridwen is said to have stirred her brew in the cauldron of knowledge for that same amount of time.

The coven will probably give you a list of expectations that may include attendance and study requirements, promises to uphold the Wiccan Rede, and an oath to keep the identity of other coven members secret. (Some witches are not "out of the broom closet" and their families and/or co-workers do not know that they are witches.) The list should *not* include sexual favors for the High Priestess, the High Priest, or any of the coven members. If it does, this is not a true Wiccan coven, and you do not want to be part of it.

The coven will hold a dedication ritual for you. While you are a dedicant, the High Priestess, High Priest, and coven members will watch you closely to see if you are

serious and if your energies mesh well with the group. You may do everything right and still not be asked to join the coven because your energies don't mix with the other coven members. There must always be love and harmony within the coven. Each member has to enter the circle in perfect love and perfect trust. If personality conflicts rear up, that trust will be destroyed. A coven is not just a club. It is more like a very tight-knit spiritual (and magickal!) family.

Initiation: Earning Your Degree

Many covens follow the steps below in the granting of degrees. Of course, there is some variation from tradition to tradition and from coven to coven.

- **First Degree Initiation.** A year and a day after your dedication, after study and hard work, and provided the High Priest and Priestess feel you are ready, you take part in a ritual in which you are reborn into the Wiccan Path. At that time, you earn your First Degree Initiation, you gain the official title of Priest or Priestess, and you become a member of the coven and a First Degree witch! You receive only one initiation. When you advance to higher degrees you receive elevations.
- **Second Degree Elevation.** At least a year and a day after earning your First Degree, and after more study and hard work, you can earn your Second Degree Elevation—if the High Priest and High Priestess feel you are ready. You will also earn the title of High Priest or Priestess. At this point, you usually can start teaching, writing, and leading ritual. In some cases, depending on the laws of your tradition, you will be able to start your own coven.
- **Third Degree Elevation.** At least a year and a day from the day you earned your Second Degree, you can get your Third Degree Elevation, provided the High Priest and High Priestess feel you are ready. Sometimes this degree takes a little more time to earn because there's a lot to learn and a lot of responsibilities that come with this title. At this point, you can earn the official title of clergy. Once you have your Third Degree, you are also given the title of Lady or Lord. Denise is known as Lady Shaharazad in the Wiccan community. Once you have your Third Degree, you are a Third Degree High Priest or Third Degree High Priestess, and you can break away from the mother coven, or hive off and form your own coven. If you do that, you will be the High Priestess (or Priest) and the leader of the new coven. If you don't want to start your own coven, you can stay in your mother coven with the rank of High Priest or High Priestess. Depending on the coven's bylaws and the tradition of the coven, you may share the responsibilities of leadership. In some traditions, coven members vote on the

leadership of the coven, and those leaders serve the coven for a year and a day. A few traditions go to four degrees, with the Fourth Degree representing training to be a High Priest or High Priestess.

So Mote It Be

If you do visit a coven, remember that you want to check them out as much as they are checking you out. Do the coven members seem friendly, healthy, and happy? Do they treat each other with respect? Does the group emphasize Wiccan teachings, such as the Wiccan Rede, and respect for the earth and all living things? Are the members having fun? If the answers to these questions are no, if the members disrespect one another and seem miserable or grim, then this is not the coven for you.

Life as a Coven Member

Being a member of a coven is a real commitment. It involves study, hard work and attendance at coven functions. The High Priestess and the High Priest, in consultation with the members, decide when the coven will meet. Covens generally meet to celebrate the 8 Sabbats—holidays of the God—and 13 Esbats—holidays of the Goddess—a year. So right there you have almost two meetings a month! Often each coven member is assigned a part to play in coven rituals. Your role in ritual is a real commitment that should be honored. If you don't attend, you could ruin the ritual for everyone. As a neophyte, you will meet with your teachers on a regular basis. You might also be asked to buy candles for the altar, run errands, or clean the *covenstead*. Covens also take on community-service projects such as cleaning up a local stream, picking up litter in a park, helping out at a soup kitchen, or cleaning cages at the animal shelter. You will be expected to participate. If you miss too many coven activities, the coven will probably ask you to leave.

def•i•ni•tion

A **covenstead** is where a coven meets. Indoors or out, it's a place where all the witches feel safe to meet and practice their Craft.

But coven members do have fun together. Sometimes, schedules permitting, they go to the movies or get together for potluck suppers. Coven members enjoy each other's company, and they learn by working closely with one another.

Priests, Priestesses, and Elders

Most covens have a High Priestess and a High Priest. Within the Gardnerian tradition, a coven must have a High Priestess. The High Priestess is seen as the Goddess incarnate and is the spiritual center of the coven. She leads the coven in ritual, usually teaches, and guides coven members on their spiritual paths. The High Priest assists the High Priestess and is seen as the God incarnate. Elders are people who have all their degrees but have chosen not to be High Priestesses or High Priests. Within the coven, they function as mediators and spiritual resources. Elders don't necessarily have to be old. They just have to be experienced in the ways of Wicca and magick.

Training as a Solitaire

Solitary witches either have to train themselves or find a teacher outside of the coven structure. This can seem a daunting task at first, but it is also an enjoyable process. Remember, learning is fun! But where do you start? Read on!

A Trip to Your Local Metaphysical Store

Most cities and towns have metaphysical stores where you can find books about witchcraft. Or check out the New Age section of one of the major chain bookstores. Many of them carry Wiccan books. If there is a women's bookshop in your area, chances are it stocks books on the Craft as well.

Wicca Workshops and Courses

If you hear about a class or a teacher, ask questions! Find out what the teacher's training is and if he or she is reputable. Is the teacher part of a coven or a solitaire? Is the teacher a High Priestess (or High Priest)? Does the teacher practice a specific tradition? Find out how long the class lasts; is it just a few weeks or does it last for a year and a day? And how much does it cost? If the teacher is a solitaire, you may be able to barter instead of paying with money. Know, though, that if the teacher asks you to do anything immoral, illegal, or that makes you uncomfortable, don't do it! Sex should never, ever enter into it. If it does, what you are learning is not Wicca. And, just to be safe, if you go over to a teacher's house for a class, let your friends and family know where you are going and when to expect you back.

Another great place to find workshops and courses about Wicca and witchcraft is at pagan festivals. Festivals are also great places to meet people and to network. You might find a teacher at a festival, or you might hear about one from someone who lives in your area.

Wicca and the Internet

The Internet has made life as a solitary witch much easier. Now, you can practice as a solitaire but still have the benefits of community—the online pagan community. Do be cautious in your interactions, though. As you know, people can pretend to be many different things when you can't see them. For good online sources of information, including listings of events, publications, workshops, and question boards visit the Witches' Voice at www.witchvox.com, Pagan and Proud at paganandproud.bravepages.com, or Mystic Wicks at www.mysticwicks.com. People also teach Wicca and witchcraft classes online. If you find a class you're interested in, remember to ask questions to make sure the teacher will meet your needs. If you do take an online class, be aware that even if you have completed your First Degree, a coven may not recognize your degree status.

When the Student Is Ready, the Teacher Will Appear

Don't worry too much about finding your teacher. Witches always say, "When the student is ready, the teacher will appear." While you're waiting for your teacher, read and learn and grow. In Chapter 25, we'll give you a plan of actions that you can take as you enter your new practice of Wicca. When you are ready for transformation, you will step on the path and it will lead you to the teacher you are meant to have.

The Least You Need to Know

- There are probably hundreds (maybe thousands!) of different kinds of witches.
- You do not have to join a coven to be a witch. Many, many witches practice on their own as solitaires and have fulfilling magickal and spiritual experiences.
- If any witch asks you to do something that is immoral, illegal, or makes you uncomfortable, don't do it! Sexual favors should never enter into your training as a witch.
- Leave it up to the Goddess, and you will find your teacher when you are ready.

Part 2 The Wiccan Way

You already know that Wicca honors the God and the Goddess. Read on to learn about the many different forms that deity can take. In this section, you'll learn about the ethics of the Wiccan faith, and we'll ask you to reflect on why you want to be a witch. Finally, we'll introduce you to your magickal tools and provide you with guidelines for doing ritual.

Chapter 4

Wiccan Deities: Homage to the Lord and Lady

In This Chapter

- All about the All
- Meet the Lord and Lady
- Working with Gods and Goddesses
- Choosing your deity

In most faiths, you worship the God or Gods of that faith. There is no choice. In Wicca, you choose which deities you are going to work with. And sometimes a deity chooses you!

You can choose which aspect of the deity you are going to work with because all deities from all cultures are seen as facets of the All. So you can work with Cerridwen and Herne from the Celtic tradition, or you can pay homage to the Hindu deities Durga and Ganesha. Wiccans have very personal relationships with deities. But let's slow down and start at the beginning.

In the Beginning, the All

Before the creation of the earth, there was the All. The All existed in knowing, stillness, and silence. The All, a female spirit, was alone. She created her other half, the male spirit. They intertwined. Even though there were now two spirits, they were still one, two halves of a whole. Together they gave birth to the universe. Then they made the stars, moons, and planets. On Earth, they made water, land, plants, animals, and humans.

The All is both male and female. No one part is better than the other. The two parts are twins of equal form. From their union came the seeds of life. The God and Goddess chose physical symbols to remind us of their presence. The Goddess chose the Moon, radiant and calm, yet changeable. The God chose the Sun, fiery and bright. These celestial bodies remind us of the God and Goddess.

Honoring the Lord and Lady

In witchcraft, you pay homage to both the God and Goddess, as manifestations of the All. Many Wiccans choose to focus primarily on the Goddess. As Denise explains it, Wiccans are more into the Goddess because she is nurturing and compassionate. In addition, many Wiccans make the Goddess their focus to make up for the hundreds of years of domination by male-centered religions.

Who Is the Lady, and Where Is She?

The Lady is the female essence of the All. She is the nurturing part, the essence of motherhood. She is there to love us, shield us, help us to learn and to grow. She is the one you'd call on for female spirituality because she understands the pain of childbirth, nurtures our spirits and our bodies, and encourages growth and connection within the family.

def•i•ni•tion

Immanent refers to something that exists or remains within. It can be something inherent. This English term comes from a Latin word that means "to remain in."

The Goddess is *immanent.* In other words, the Goddess is in everything and is everywhere. She is not some force that looks down on us from above. The Goddess dwells in every single thing—in every tree, in every dog and cat, in every grain of sand and drop of rain, and inside you.

Who Is the Lord, and Where Is He?

The Lord is the male essence of the All. He is the wild, playful, and lusty aspect of deity. He is there to protect us. He is the one you may want to call for if you suddenly need physical strength and agility. He can help you bear what life has thrust upon you by lending his speed, agility, and ability to adapt to change. Just as the Lady is, the Lord is immanent. He exists in everything.

How Do You Relate to the Lady?

You work with, respect, and honor the Lady. You don't beg for favors from her. You can see her as a Goddess from an ancient culture, or you can work with her as an abstraction. Many people feel more comfortable giving her a face and a personality. The Lady nurtures your growth. She is the abundance that the earth has to give. She has that hidden, inner knowledge, or sixth sense, that all women have. You can pull upon that part of her to guide you and help you grow. She will teach you, nurture you, and provide for you. In return, you give her your love. Out of that love, you do your best to take care of the earth that she has provided for you.

Luna: Maiden, Mother, Crone, and Enchantress

Luna is the Roman Goddess of the Moon. The Goddess's three phases—Maiden, Mother, and Crone—represent the three stages of a woman's life. The Maiden is an innocent young girl. To her everything is new. She is health, sweetness, and tenderness. As the Mother, she has matured. She is all-loving, protective, and nurturing. When humankind takes actions that hurt the earth, she can get angry. And yet she still loves us, however badly we behave. She sends us signs so we, her children, can learn from our mistakes. The Crone, an old woman, holds all the things we have learned throughout our lifetimes. She can be stern, but she is a great teacher. She takes us back into her, into the Goddess, in death. These three aspects of the Goddess correlate to the phases of the Moon—new, full, and waning.

The Enchantress is that part of the Goddess, and of all women, that seduces. She is that sexy playful spirit that we get from the All. She is both Maiden and Mother, and as such relates to the Moon when it is new, waxing (growing bigger in the sky), and full.

So Mote It Be

In your journal, jot down a few words about your conception of the Goddess. You don't have to write in sentences or worry about spelling. Just write down whatever comes into your head. What does she look like? How does she dress? What's the first thing that you notice about her when you see her? Does she have a scent? What does her voice sound like? And what about the God? Do they look alike, or are they different? Give yourself at least 10 minutes, then read your words. Highlight any passages or ideas that you particularly like. Keep this piece in your journal so you can refer to it in the future.

The Charge of the Goddess

"The Charge of the Goddess" is an invocation that is frequently used in Wiccan ritual. There are many different versions of the charge. Here is the most widely known one:

When I have departed from this world,
Whenever ye have need of anything,
Once in a month, and when the Moon is full,
Ye shall assemble in some desert place,
Or in a forest all together join
To adore the potent spirit of your queen,
My Mother, great Diana. She who fain
Would learn all sorcery yet has not won
Its deepest secrets them my mother
Teach her, in truth all things as yet unknown
And ye shall all be free from slavery,
And so ye shall be free in everything:
And as the sign that ye are truly free,
Ye shall be naked in your rites, both men
And women also: this shall last until
The last of your oppressors shall be dead:
And ye shall make a game of Benevento,
Extinguishing the lights, and after that
Shall hold your supper thus.

Webweaving

"The Charge of the Goddess" was first published in *Aradia: The Gospel of the Witches,* by Charles Leland. In 1897, a witch named Maddalena is said to have given him the text. "The Charge of the Goddess" has been adapted several times by a variety of authors.

If you like, you can adapt "The Charge of the Goddess" so that it suits you. Or try this one Denise wrote:

High Priest: Listen to the words of the Great Mother, the ancient one of ageless time. She was known by many among those who worshiped her. Artemis, Diana, Morrigan, Aphrodite, Venus, Cerridwen, Isis, Mary, and by many other names.

High Priestess: Whenever you have need, come to me. Assemble in a place of secret, better it be when the Moon is full and give praise to the spirit of me.

I am Queen of the Witches and those who seek the knowledge of the Craft of the Wise. From me flow all its mysteries and its darkest secrets. I will teach those who gather in my honor and seek to know all its sorcery. There in my place of worship you shall sing, dance, feast, make music and love in my praise. For to do this in the presence of me shall truly set you free from bondage. In my spirit you shall feel ecstasy and joy on Earth.

In striving for your highest ideals keep your heart and spirit pure. Let no one stop you or turn you aside from me.

Enter the Land of Youth through my secret door and drink from the Chalice of Life Eternal. It is there that you will find the Holy Grail of Immortality and the Cauldron of Cerridwen. Drink in the gifts of joy, knowledge, and eternal spirit that I have bestowed upon humanity.

Upon death you will receive my gifts of peace and freedom. You shall be reunited in the spirit of love with those who have passed over before you. I demand no sacrifice in my name, for to do so would dishonor the spirit of me. I am the Mother of all living things. Give reverence unto me by honoring all that I have bestowed upon the earth.

High Priest: Hear the words of the Great Moon Goddess, she whose light illuminates the heavens and whose spirit weaves the tapestry of the universe.

High Priestess: Cherish and protect the earth's beauty, which holds the gateway to the entrance of my temple. Call my name when you gaze upon the white Moon that stands alone in the night sky amidst the stars of heaven. Learn the mysteries of the waters and hold tightly to the desire in your hearts.

I who gave life to the universe give my soul to Nature, therefore rise up and give your soul to me. Always know that from me all things proceed and unto me all things must return. Through me, let my beauty, compassion, strength, power, humility, and the honors of my spirit reside within you. Let my rituals of love and pleasures remain in the heart that rejoices in my worship.

To those who seek to know me, understand that all of your yearning will be in vain unless you know the mystery. If what you seek is not found within you,

> then you shall never find it without. For behold I am alpha and omega, the beginning and the end. I have always been and always will be with you.

If you use "The Charge of the Goddess" with a group, you want to have the person in the role of High Priest read the sections marked for him. The High Priestess reads the rest of the charge. During "The Charge of the Goddess," the High Priestess is seen to become the Goddess incarnate. You do not, however, have to be a High Priestess or, for that matter, even a woman to pull the Goddess into you. We all can fill ourselves with her energy, because she is the mother of us all.

How Do You Relate to the Lord?

You work with the Lord in the form of a God or as an abstraction. He is the essence of fatherhood. He is kind, gentle, and protective, but he can also show his wrath. You look to him with honor and respect and gain from him his guidance, wisdom, protection, and strength. You pull on this aspect of the All to protect and strengthen your life, in order to do what you need to do, so you in turn can protect your family. The Lord is also representative of the playfulness and heavy sexuality that we all have within us.

Nature's Royal Prince, King, and Elder

Just as the Goddess can be seen in three phases (Maiden, Mother, and Crone), the God has three phases as well. As Nature's Royal Prince, he is a youth, full of wonder, curiosity, and playfulness. As the King, he has matured into a man—noble, protective, and just. And as the Elder he is an old man—wise, weathered, and strong.

Charge of the God

Like "The Charge of the Goddess," "The Charge of the God" is an invocation. Here's a version that Denise wrote:

> *High Priestess:* Listen to the words of the God who is son, lover, and consort of the Lady. He is the ancient one of time eternal, the great father who of old we know as Ra, Osiris, Zeus, Thor, Pan, Herne, Luke, and by a thousand other names.
>
> *High Priest:* I am the radiant Sun, King of the Heaven. Come to me whenever you seek haven in my spirit. Assemble in some secret place, most notably at the eight sacred days of the wheel, and give praise. Set aside the restrictions of

cultural laws and, like the beasts of the forest that are of hoof and horn, run naked and free in my presence. Sing and dance, make love, and celebrate. Delight in the moment.

My law is harmony. My love is the seed that fertilizes the earth. My rapture is of the mind. In the grain that bursts forth and grows, I am life abundant. In the fall harvest when the grain is cut down, I am death, the gentle reaper, king of the underworld, where the living may not venture. And in spring, I am rebirth, the hidden seed of creation that bursts forth into being.

High Priestess: Hear now the words of the great horned one whose song stirs the astral winds and whose music changes the season from one to the next, flowing in a smooth rhythm.

High Priest: I, who am the Sun, the keeper of the lamp that sends out the light to warm the earth, the lord of the hunt, the master of the winds that spread the seed of life, I call upon you now to arise and come unto me. Show respect for the wonder of me. Give love to others as I have given love to you. Let there dwell within you the magnificence of life, tenderness of heart, the glory of the spirit, mastery of emotions and merriment and pleasure. Keep me always in your heart, for I am the giver of peace, the source of life, the father of all things, and my protection blankets the temple of life, the body of the Lady and the earth.

Just as both male and female practitioners can pull down the Moon, both male and female can pull down the Sun.

Who Are All the Other Gods and Goddesses?

All Gods and Goddesses are aspects of the All. Before you start to work with these aspects, you need to learn all about them. Learn the deities' likes and dislikes. Who are their allies among the other deities? Who are their consorts? What makes them angry? How do they relate to the other Gods and Goddesses in their *pantheon?* We'll give you an introduction to some of the major Gods and Goddesses in this chapter. But you'll probably also want to look for myths about the Gods and Goddesses from the cultures that interest you.

def•i•ni•tion

A **pantheon** is the collection of all the deities from one culture. It can also be a temple that has been dedicated to all the Gods.

The Pantheon: Getting the Big Picture

While you are learning the Craft, work with deities from one pantheon. Don't mix and match Gods and Goddesses from different cultures. First discover all you can about one pantheon. Later on, you can branch out and start to learn how deities from one system relate to deities from another.

Working with Deities: Sometimes Light, Sometimes Dark

The deity you want to work with on a given day will depend on what you want to do. If you are working with the Celtic pantheon and you need healing and inspiration, you may want to call on Brigid. Within the Egyptian system, you might invoke Bastet to renew your sense of play and help you look on the bright side. You can work with any God or Goddess that you want. Some deities encompass a light energy, and others are darker. Be aware of the qualities of the deity you are working with. Know that Hecate is wise *and* that she is associated with the underworld. Athena is also wise, and she is a warrior. She does not have as dark an energy as Hecate does.

Choosing Your Pantheon: Some Famous Deities

You may have read about the Greek Gods and Goddesses in school. Deities from the other traditions may be less familiar to you. Read up on the pantheon that appeals to you. Stories of the Gods and Goddesses are always fascinating and full of drama! And the stories will give you insight into the nuances of each deity's personality. Here are some of the major Gods and Goddesses from a number of different pantheons.

Greek Gods and Goddesses:

- **Aphrodite.** The Goddess of sexuality, love, beauty, and reconciliation. In ancient times, soldiers returning from war were cleansed by her powerful love so they could rejoin society whole and undamaged by their battle experiences. She is a beautiful and often naked young woman. Sometimes she is covered, or partially covered, in a cloth. She can be seen carrying a dove or stepping out of the sea. When working with Aphrodite, be careful. In addition to being associated with love and sex, she is also known for the pain that comes along with the sexual passion she grants. Know that when working with her, every pleasure will have its price.

Banish!

Resist the temptation to pick a very dark God or Goddess just because you can. Remember, your work with a deity should benefit you, not scare you. And what you do is for the good of all. Remember, "An it harm none, do what ye will."

- **Apollo.** The God of healing and the arts. He is the twin brother of Artemis and is young and handsome. Together, Apollo and Artemis represent the Lord and the Lady. As twins, they are part of one whole, while at the same time, they are separate. Apollo carries a lyre, a bow, and arrows. He drives a golden chariot.
- **Artemis.** The Goddess of the Moon, the hunt, and women. She is also associated with fertility, young girls, and the virgin huntress. She is seen as a beautiful maiden and typically carries a bow and quiver of arrows. Often birds, deer, or lions accompany her. She is also known for the comfort that she provides to women in childbirth. When working with Artemis, know that she can be very demanding and temperamental. But because of her strength, she can get things done.
- **Athena.** The Goddess of wisdom. She is a beautiful and serious young woman. A warrior, she wears a breastplate and helmet and carries a lance and a shield. Sometimes she has an owl with her. She is associated with the city of Athens and with the olive tree.
- **Demeter.** The Goddess of the harvest, the fertile earth, motherhood, mother love, and the seasons. She is an old woman and the mother of Persephone. She often weeps because she and Persephone have been separated. Such is Demeter's love for her daughter that when Persephone descends into the underworld each year, Demeter's pain is so great that winter descends upon the earth. And when Persephone returns in the spring, Demeter's joy is such that the earth becomes warm and blooms again. Demeter is known for establishing the Eleusinian Mysteries, an ancient religious rite of spring.
- **Dionysus.** The God of wine, the life force, and the wildness of instinct. He is impulsive, and his energy can be felt in the pull toward all good and pleasurable things. Too much of his party-wild spirit can be a problem so he is usually handled with care. A young man dressed in an animal skin, Dionysus carries a staff and sometimes is seen as a bull or a goat. Images of him often resemble the Holly King or Santa Claus.
- **Gaia.** The Mother Earth. She sits on a throne and holds many fruits, grains, and vegetables, often in a cornucopia. She is a mature woman and usually wears a robe from which she gets her nickname "The Mother of Robes." In the fall, she typically is seen dressed in brown, while in the winter, she wears white. In the spring, her robes are yellow, and in the summer they are green. Gaia is often used in Craft rituals.

- **Hecate.** The Goddess of magick and the Moon. She is the patron of witches and queen of the spirit world. She can take a few different forms and is also associated with the underworld. She often carries a torch and has snakes in her hair. She can have three heads—those of the Maiden, Mother, and Crone. She can be found at the spot where three roads meet, at other types of crossroads, in braids, knots, and in cemeteries.
- **Hera.** The Goddess of married women and childbirth. She is known for her faithfulness, nobility, and generosity. But she also has a terrible temper, so you want to be careful not to make her angry. If you do, she will get even. Married to Zeus, Hera is the queen of the Gods. She wears a crown and carries a scepter. She is mature, beautiful, and extraordinarily strong.
- **Pan.** The God of wild places, wild things, and shepherds. Pan is associated with all that is spirited, young, and virile. He plays a set of connected pipes called panpipes and takes a form that is half man and half goat. His legs and feet are of the goat, while his chest and upper body are that of a hairy man. He usually has horns. Pan is frequently invoked in pagan rituals, particularly in circles made up entirely of men.
- **Persephone.** The Goddess of the harvest, fertility, and spring. She often is seen sitting with Hades on a throne in the underworld, where she spends a number of months every year. She represents honor and the keeping of promises. Sometimes she is pictured carrying a pomegranate. She is also called Kore, the maiden.
- **Poseidon.** The God of water and the seas. He is the protector of sailors and all those on sea voyages. He always carries a trident and is associated with dolphins and horses. Poseidon is often called upon when doing rituals on the beach.
- **Zeus.** The God of the sky and the king of the Gods. He is associated with rain and clouds and often carries a thunderbolt. He is married to Hera, but often falls in love with other women. He is a bearded man of great wisdom and authority.

Roman Gods and Goddesses:

- **Bacchus.** The God of wine, fertility, vegetation, and hedonism. He loves to party and is a happy drunk. He showers his friends with never-ending chalices of wine. He often dresses in purple with a crown of vine leaves on his head.

- **Diana.** The Goddess of fertility and the protector of women and their virtue. A beautiful maiden huntress, she is associated with the Moon and the woods. She often has dogs or a stag with her. Diana is often used in Craft rituals.
- **Janus.** The God of beginnings and doorways. He is a protector and father figure and is often depicted as a bearded man with two faces. One face looks into the past, the other into the future. He can see the inside and the outside of all things at the same time. An image of Janus is often placed above the door of a house to protect the house and its inhabitants.
- **Juno.** The Goddess of women and the Moon. She is married to Jupiter and is queen of the Gods. In one of her aspects, she is the Goddess of childbirth. A beautiful woman, she has dark hair and wears a robe. The cow, the peacock, and the goose are sacred to her.
- **Jupiter.** The God of the sky and the king of the Gods. He is described in the same way as the Greek God Zeus.
- **Luna.** Goddess of the Moon, change, and a woman's monthly cycle. She appears as the Maiden, the Mother, and the Crone. She is also known as Selene.
- **Mars.** The God of warriors and agriculture. He gives strength and courage to soldiers. Dressed in armor and carrying a shield, Mars is a large man. His companion animals include a wolf, a woodpecker, and a vulture.
- **Mercury.** The God of communication, thought, and travel. He is described as a beautiful, athletic young man. He wears sandals with wings, a helmet with wings, and carries a *caduceus*.
- **Neptune.** The God of water and the seas. He is described in the same way as the Greek God Poseidon.
- **Pluto.** The God of the underworld and of wealth. He is also king of the dead. A mature man, he wears a beard and a helmet and often is seen seated on a throne.
- **Venus.** The Goddess of sexuality, love, and beauty. Physically, she is described in much the same way as the Greek Goddess Aphrodite.

def•i•ni•tion

A **caduceus** is a wand or staff with two snakes twined around it. At the top of the wand sits a pair of wings. In the nineteenth century, the caduceus was used by a publishing company that put out medical books. Because of its association with these books, the caduceus became associated with medicine. Today the caduceus is a symbol of the medical profession.

Hindu Gods and Goddesses:

- **Durga.** The great Mother Goddess. She often rides a lion and has four arms in which she carries a drum, a sword, a trident, and a bowl filled with blood.
- **Ganesha.** The elephant-headed God. Beloved by all, he is the God of new beginnings, success, travel, and prosperity. He also is the overcomer of obstacles. Besides his elephant head, he has a potbelly. In his four arms, he carries roses, a piece of his broken tusk, a thorn, and a bowl. He often rides upon a very small rat.
- **Hanuman.** The monkey God. His job is to tour the world singing the name of God. He has great strength and learning and is mischievous. Often he has wings. He can be a fierce warrior.
- **Kali.** The Goddess of Earth, Nature, destruction, creation, and renewal. With wild dark hair, a blood-smeared body, and a protruding tongue, she wears a necklace of human skulls and often stands on her husband Shiva. You can use Kali to clear away problems that are old and useless so that your healing can begin and your new endeavors prosper.
- **Krishna.** The God of love. He takes the form of a man with blue skin. He often plays the flute. If you are familiar with Christianity, you will find that Krishna's life is almost identical to that of Jesus Christ. The only difference—Krishna predates Christ by more than 500 years.
- **Siva** or **Shiva.** The God of change, transformation, and destruction. He is the creator of yoga and a dancer. He is seen as a kindhearted God and is both merciful and generous. When angered, however, he can be deadly. Siva has a soft spot for the disadvantaged in life, whether their difficulties be spiritual, mental, or physical. He is depicted as a man with a third eye between his eyebrows, and he often carries a trident and an axe.

Egyptian Gods and Goddesses:

- **Amun, Amon,** or **Amen.** The God of creation, fertility, reproduction, and sexual power. He is associated with the pharaohs and the Sun and was known as the one supreme God. He carries a whip and sometimes is seated in a throne. He also can be depicted as a ram with a coiled cobra on his head.
- **Anubis.** The God of the dead and of transformation. He is associated with funerals, the truth, and change. He is the protector of the dead, ruler of the underworld, and a guide for all souls in transition. He has the body of a man and the head of a jackal. Sometimes he is shown as entirely jackal.

- **Bastet** or **Bast.** The Goddess of the Sun, pleasure, and play. She is also the Goddess of the East, generosity, childbirth, music, healing, fire, the Moon, protection, and sex. She is the mother of all cats and the protector of all animals. She has a human body and the head of a cat. She carries a rattle and wears a breastplate decorated with the head of a lion. A very warm and kind Goddess to work with, Bastet will help you look on the bright side of life.

So Mote It Be

You will develop a personal relationship with the deity that you choose to work with. To help that relationship develop and to welcome that deity into your life, get a picture of your chosen God or Goddess. Many stores sell images of ancient deities. Or find a picture in a book in the library and make a color copy.

- **Hathor.** The Goddess of beauty, love, and pleasure. She is a woman with the horns of a cow, and sometimes all of her takes the form of a cow. She often carries a rattle.
- **Horus.** A solar God and the avenger of evil. Horus is seen in the form of a man with the head of a falcon or as a falcon with the Moon as one eye and the Sun as the other. Sometimes he appears as a child standing on the back of a crocodile.
- **Isis.** The mother and supreme Goddess. She is associated with fertility, womanhood, virility, healing, motherhood, marital devotion, the Moon, magick, and resurrection. She is considered to be the most powerful magickian in the universe. She is usually seated and sometimes holds the infant Horus.
- **Nephthys.** The Goddess of magick, dreams, metamorphosis, and intuition. She is associated with the earth, fertility, and change. She takes the form of a woman with a hieroglyph on her head.
- **Nut** or **Nuit.** The Goddess of the sky. She is young and slim. Stars shine from within her body. She usually appears naked, arched over Geb, the Earth God. She is very popular and is frequently called upon in circle.
- **Osiris.** God of commerce, success, religion, civilization, arts, crafts, law, and resurrection into eternal life. He is the brother and husband of Isis. He takes the form of a mummy with the head of a live man. His face often has a slight green cast.
- **Ra.** The Sun God. The source of all life, truth, rituals, spells, and prosperity, Ra is a man with the head of a falcon. As the Sun appears to move across the sky, so he travels through the sky. At night, he journeys through the underworld and his head becomes that of a ram.

- **Sekhmet.** The lion-headed Goddess. She is the powerful Goddess of war and battle. She wears a coiled cobra crown. Once, while fighting, she got a taste of blood and became so excited that she started killing everyone in sight. To calm her down, Ra poured red beer on the ground. Thinking it was blood, she drank the beer, became intoxicated, and fell asleep. Upon awakening she had such a hangover that she lost her thirst for blood. When working with her, always keep red beer on your altar so she stays mellow. Sekhmet is frequently called upon in circle. (See Chapter 11 to learn about magick circles.)
- **Thoth.** God of mysteries, secret wisdom, the intellect, mathematics, and magick. He is also associated with the Moon. According to legend, he wrote 42 books, including a book of symbols with which to look into the future—the basis for the modern-day Tarot.

Celtic Gods and Goddesses:

- **Brigid.** The Goddess of healing, inspiration, and craftspeople. She has great strength and can be called upon to help you endure hardship. Also known as Bridget, she is associated with fertility and childbirth and is the daughter of Dagda. Dagda actually had triplets, all of whom were named Brigid. Brigid was so loved by the Celtic people that she was made into a Christian saint. Her veneration has also crossed over into voodoo.
- **Cernunnos** or **Kernunnos.** The horned God. He takes the form of a man with the horns of a stag. He is the universal father. Sometimes he has three heads. He is the consort of the Lady and is also associated with snakes. He represents the embodiment of a raw state of wild and untamed virility. He is often called in pagan rituals.
- **Cerridwen.** The Goddess of the Moon, the harvest, and inspiration. She can be dark, like the Crone or the darkening Moon. She is often seen as a hag, stirring the cauldron of knowledge. It takes her a year and a day to prepare her brew—the same amount of time a witch studies between dedication and First Degree Initiation, and between First Degree Initiation and Second Degree Elevation.
- **Dagda.** The God of knowledge, life, death, and plenty. He is properly known as "The Dagda." He is the Celtic equivalent of Zeus and is father to both men and gods. He controls the passage of the seasons and is a jack-of-all-trades—no matter what he does, he does it well. He loves food, sex, and all the pleasures of the world. His energies lend themselves well to spells for prosperity and abundance.

- **Herne.** The God of the underworld and of change. He is the leader of the phantom hunt and a guide for all those who are making, or who desire, a change. He is usually depicted with the antlers of a stag and is associated with the crossroads.
- **Lug** (Lugh or Lugas). The God of magick, art, music, healing, strength, beauty, courage, and intelligence. He is also associated with war and with the Sun. The greatest of all the Celtic Gods, Lug's name spread throughout Europe, and even the Romans were intimidated by him. The Sabbat known as Lughnassad, the first harvest festival, is named after him. You can work with Lug for just about anything you need. He is accomplished at everything he does and is athletic, handsome, and youthful.
- **Morrigan.** The Goddess of war, fertility, and vegetation. She is queen of the demons and has three faces. In her warlike aspect, she is a bat with red eyebrows. She can also appear as a raven, crow, or horse. She will take care of the wrongdoing that someone has done.

Other Gods and Goddesses frequently used in Wiccan rituals:

- **Aradia.** The queen of the witches in the Italian tradition. She is the daughter of the Great Mother. She is very powerful as she serves as the intermediary between her mother and human beings. She can be called on to protect any witch.
- **Astarte.** The Goddess of love and war in the Middle Eastern tradition. Usually naked, she wears a necklace and carries a spear. Sometimes she stands on a lion and has horns that take the shape of a crescent moon. Many people believe that she encompasses the same aspects of the Goddess as Ishtar.
- **Freyja.** The Goddess of love and fertility in the Norse tradition. She is a beautiful woman who drives a chariot drawn by cats. Sometimes she rides on a golden boar. Freyja is very popular in pagan ritual, particularly in the Pacific Northwest.
- **The Holly King** and **the Oak King.** The Gods of the changing seasons. They usher in the turn of the seasons. The Holly King rules the darker months from Summer Solstice to Winter Solstice. And the Oak King rules the brighter half of the year from Winter Solstice to Summer Solstice. At the solstices, they engage in battle. In some covens, particularly those with children, this battle is staged as a water balloon fight. Many people consider these twin deities to be aspects of the Celtic Cernunnos.

- **Ishtar.** The Goddess of heaven, the Moon, sex, law, prophecy, and creation. She was worshiped throughout many cultures in ancient Mesopotamia. She often carries an eight-pointed star and sometimes is seen standing in a chariot drawn by lions.
- **Lilith.** The Goddess of storms in the Sumerian tradition. She has been associated with the Moon, disorder, education, and knowledge. According to legend, she was Adam's first wife, but she left him because she loved her independence. Today she represents female wisdom, power, courage, passion, independence, and self-determination.
- **Quan Yin.** The Chinese Goddess of mercy. She will protect you from danger. Newlyweds often pray to her for fertility. She is also called the queen of heaven. She is pictured sitting on a lotus, holding a vase full of the dew of compassion. In addition, she is associated with the willow tree.
- **Thor.** The Norse God of thunderstorms and the life force. He is a big guy with a red beard. In his hands, which are sheathed in iron gloves, he carries a hammer. Two goats draw his chariot.

The Least You Need to Know

- The All—the Lord and Lady—are present in all things and in all beings.
- The Lord and Lady are two major aspects of the All. They are different from one another, but equal. Gods and Goddesses from all the different pantheons represent various aspects of the All.
- In Wicca, you choose the form of deity that you work with, based on your personal preferences and what areas you want to work on. You can choose from many different traditions and many different Gods and Goddesses.
- You work with deities. You do not beg from them.

Chapter 5

So You Want to Be a Witch?

In This Chapter

- Check your motivations
- Take care of your temple
- Remember, harm none!
- Magickal energy and responsibility

Wiccan witches live their lives according to the principles and moral code of their religion. These principles are not rigid, and yet they are not always easy to follow. Abiding by the Wiccan faith can require a good deal of thought and your good actions.

In this chapter, we'll help you look at the reasons you want to become a witch. Committing yourself to the Craft is a serious step that you don't want to enter into lightly. You may want to take some time to mull over the issues raised in this chapter.

Why Do You Want to Be a Witch?

Do you want to live in tune with yourself and Nature? Do you want to grow spiritually and gain a greater understanding of the divine? Witchcraft could be the path for you. Keep in mind that being a witch is more

than saying chants, doing spells, and knowing cool stuff. Wicca is a spiritual path. It's important to look at your motivations before you set off on your journey.

A Self-Exploration

Take some time and meditate on each question. Be entirely honest with yourself. Write down your thoughts in your journal or Book of Shadows. (See Chapter 7 for more on creating your BOS.)

1. Are you attracted to Wicca because it seems really different? Does it strike you as totally different from the religion you were raised with? If your grandmother knew you were investigating Wicca, would she freak out?
2. Do you like the idea that you could cast a spell to change the dynamics between you and your friends or family? Do you like the idea that spells operate in secret? That you could cast a spell and no one would know?
3. Do you think Wicca and magick can improve your social life?
4. How much of a draw is all the cool magickal stuff—wand, pentacles, athames, and cauldrons?
5. Does having a reason to dress up in unusual outfits make Wicca sound fun? Do you often dress in clothes that set you apart from others and cause people on the street to take notice? Do you like feeling different? Or do you enjoy scaring people?
6. Are you attracted to Wicca because it will make you stronger? Is that sense of power really important to you? In your normal everyday life, do you feel strong or weak?
7. Are you considering Wicca because your friends are into it? Or did you just learn that this really awesome person you recently met is Wiccan so you want to be Wiccan, too?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, stop now. Time out! Do not pass Go, do not collect $200. Please go back and reread this chapter and read Chapters 1, 3, and 4 again. But let's look at each set of questions one by one:

1. Wicca, like all religions, has a strong moral code. If you think Wicca is super different, think again. Sure, there are differences between Wicca and, say, Presbyterianism, but when you boil it down, faiths of any stripe have more similarities than differences. (And please be nice and don't scare your grandma!)

2. First, remember the Wiccan Rede? Remember the whole idea that you treat others the way you yourself would like to be treated? And what about the law of three? Everything you do will come back to you threefold! And besides, casting spells on your friends and family without their knowledge and permission, even if those spells are designed to make your life easier and more harmonious, would be unethical. You cannot manipulate someone else's free will. Now, if you want to cast a spell on yourself so that you become more agreeable and easier to get along with, well, we won't stop you.
3. Again, casting spells on other people without their permission is unethical and an all around bad idea. So you would not want to cast a spell to make new friends. Okay, it is true that joining a coven could bring new and like-minded people into your life. But the primary point of a coven, the primary focus of Wicca, is to honor the God and the Goddess.
4. Okay, we will fess up, that we really like magickal stuff, too. But, that said, if the cool stuff is a major reason you want to be a witch, then you may have a problem. Being a witch involves commitment. Being a witch means you have promised to act for the greater good and will actively work to make the world a better place.
5. Do we have to tell you that scaring people is not a good thing? Remember the Wiccan Rede and harm none! Dressing the part of a witch and being a witch are not the same thing. We know witches who wear nothing but jeans and t-shirts. If you really want to be different, walk the walk—live an ethical life, take care of the earth and all of her children.
6. Hmmm ... well, actually, a practice of Wicca probably will make you stronger. Hunger for power, though, is something you'll want to examine in yourself. If you've been ground down, a desire to get the upper hand is natural. But having power, the power to control your own life and confidently make decisions, is not the same thing as having power over someone else. You can work to control your own fate and actions, but not the lives of other people.
7. It's nice to share activities with your friends. But becoming a witch is about your relationship with the God and Goddess, and sharing that commitment with others who practice the Wiccan faith with devotion and commitment. In being Wiccan, you may meet a lot of cool people (and a lot of cool people *are* Wiccan ...) but remember Wicca is more than an after-school club or social group; it is a religion.

We hope you've learned something from our little quiz. We also hope that when you look inside you like what you see. You understand that Wicca and witchcraft involve self-knowledge, ethics, and morality. You also know that being a witch means you have made a commitment to the God and Goddess and to Nature. Do you feel confident that being a witch is the right path for you? Many, many people do feel that way. They feel confident, as we do, that witchcraft is their right path because witches hold not only to their beliefs, but to their strong moral principles.

Webweaving

Why are witches associated with brooms and flying? As early as 1458, an inquisitor for the Church declared that believing that witches could fly was part of the true and Catholic faith. During that period in history, witches were thought to fly out of their chimneys, mounted astride sticks. By 1580, brooms became one of the vehicles of choice.

Even if you have discovered that you are not ready to practice Wicca, read on! You can learn a lot (and grow a lot) from finding out more about various religions. Wicca's nature-based belief system may be just the thing to help you open your mind and your heart.

More on the Witches' Council and the Thirteen Goals of a Witch

In 1974, the Council of American Witches, an organization that no longer exists, drew up a list—the "Principles of Wiccan Belief." We gave you a summary of those 13 principles in Chapter 1. You might want to look them over again. The formulation of these principles has been important in giving Wicca legal status as a religion under U.S. law. In fact, the handbooks issued to U.S. Army chaplains contain these 13 principles.

Scott Cunningham, the respected author of more than 30 books and a practicing witch for 20 years, came up with another list of important principles for witches. Cunningham details the 13 goals of a witch:

1. Know yourself.
2. Know your Craft.
3. Learn.
4. Apply knowledge with wisdom.
5. Achieve balance.
6. Keep your words in good order.
7. Keep your thoughts in good order.

8. Celebrate life.
9. Attune with the cycles of the earth.
10. Breathe and eat correctly.
11. Exercise the body.
12. Meditate.
13. Honor the Goddess and God.

We think these are great goals for everyone, witch or not. The point of many of them is that you have to respect yourself *and* your body. Your body is sacred because it carries your soul. And because your body carries your soul, it carries the essence of the God and the Goddess. Yes, *you* have the God and the Goddess inside you.

Following the Wiccan Way

You're probably understanding that being a witch is not just about casting spells and wearing cool outfits. Neither is it a hobby or a pastime. Being a witch means that you are walking on the Wiccan path. It's a lifestyle, and it is more than that. Being a witch is about commitment and responsibility—to yourself, to your coven (if you have one), to your community, and to the earth.

The Wiccan Rede

Remember the Wiccan Rede from Chapter 1: "An it harm none, do what ye will"? Well, here is the full text of the poem from which the Rede is drawn.

The Rede of the Wiccae (Being Known as the Counsel of the Wise Ones)

1. Bide the Wiccan laws ye must
   in perfect love and perfect trust.
2. Live and let live—
   fairly take and fairly give.
3. Cast the Circle thrice about
   to keep all evil spirits out.
4. To bind the spell every time,
   let the spell be spake in rhyme.
5. Soft of eye and light of touch—
   speak little, listen much.

def•i•ni•tion

Deosil means "clockwise." Deosil movement in a circle is used to draw the positive. **Widdershins** means "counterclockwise." Widdershins movement is usually used in dispelling negative things, such as bad energy or disease.

6. *Deosil* go by the waxing Moon—
   sing and dance the Wiccan rune.
7. *Widdershins* go when the Moon doth wane,
   and the Werewolf howls by the dread
   Wolfsbane.
8. When the Lady's Moon is new,
   kiss the hand to her times two.
9. When the Moon rides at her peak,
   then your heart's desire seek.
10. Heed the Northwind's mighty gale—
    lock the door and drop the sail.
11. When the wind comes from the South,
    love will kiss thee on the mouth.
12. When the wind blows from the East,
    expect the new and set the feast.
13. When the West wind blows o'er thee,
    departed spirits restless be.
14. Nine woods in the Cauldron go—
    burn them quick and burn them slow.
15. Elder be ye Lady's tree—
    burn it not or cursed ye'll be.
16. When the Wheel begins to turn—
    let the Beltane fires burn.
17. When the Wheel has turned a Yule,
    light the Log and let Pan rule.
18. Heed ye flower, bush and tree—
    by the Lady blessed be.
19. Where the rippling waters go,
    cast a stone an truth ye'll know.
20. When ye have need,
    hearken not to other's greed.
21. With the fool no season spend
    or be counted as his friend.

22. Merry meet an merry part—
bright the cheeks an warm the heart.
23. Mind the Threefold Law ye
should—
three times bad and three times
good.
24. When misfortune is enow,
wear the blue star on thy brow.
25. True in love ever be
unless thy lover's false to thee.
26. Eight words the Wiccan Rede fulfill—
an it harm none, do what ye will.

So Mote It Be

Why not learn "The Rede of the Wiccae" by heart? If you memorize it, then you really will have it in your heart! Write a couplet out a few times on scrap paper. Post the couplet in places where you'll see it—on your computer monitor, the dashboard of your car, the door to the refrigerator, the bathroom mirror. Before you know it, you will know it! Then you can add another one.

Honoring the Wiccan Rede

So that's the Wiccan Rede. We think it's quite beautiful. But what, you ask, does it mean? Let's take a look, line by line:

1. You must keep the Wiccan laws with an attitude of perfect love and perfect trust. If you don't completely agree with what Wicca is about, you might want to rethink your choice to follow the Wiccan path.
2. Respect people and Nature. Treat them both as you want to be treated.
3. Witches generally create a circle around them when preparing to do magick. The circle is cast, or made, three times because three is a very magickal number. It stands for the three phases of the Goddess and God, and it's the number of creativity. In addition, there is the threefold law that says events usually happen in threes.
4. Witches speak their spells in rhyme because it gives the conscious mind something to do. While your conscious mind is busy listening to the words, your unconscious can tap into your energy and the energy of the God and Goddess—and magick is done.
5. Be gentle. Sit back and listen. Wise people don't blab; they listen.
6. When the Moon is waxing, or getting bigger, move around the ritual circle clockwise to bring good things toward you.

7. When the Moon is waning, or getting smaller, move around the circle counterclockwise to take away negativity. Wolfsbane is dreaded because it is a poisonous plant.
8. When the Moon is new and has just become visible in the sky again after being dark, salute the Lady and welcome her by kissing your two fingers.
9. When the Moon is full, go after your heart's desire. At that time of the month, you can ask anything of her.
10. through 13. These couplets describe various elements associated with the four directions.
14. and 15. There are nine different kinds of magickal wood that are often burned in the cauldron during rituals—apple, birch, fir, hawthorn, hazel, oak, rowan, vine, and willow. But never burn the elder (that's a kind of tree, too). Elder trees are the Lady's trees, and in honor of her they are always spared.
16. and 17. The turning of the wheel refers to the cycle of the year. Beltane is one of the year's major Sabbats, or holidays. It occurs in the spring. Yule, another Sabbat, sits on the opposite side of the wheel of the year, at the time of the winter solstice.
18. Take care of Nature, and respect it for the Lady's sake.
19. Watch what happens when you throw a stone into water. The ripples spread out from where the stone landed. In much the same way, your actions, like the stone, send out ripples that affect everyone and everything around you.
20. Don't allow the idea of profit to sway you. Don't take money for your magickal work.
21. People will associate you with the company you keep. If you hang around with fools, you may just be seen as one, too.
22. Basically, this means it's good to be with friends.
23. Pay attention to the threefold law. Whatever you do, good or bad, comes back to you three times.

24. When you are in trouble, visualize a blue *pentagram* on your forehead. The pentagram will protect you.
25. Be loyal in love, but if the person isn't loyal to you, forget about him (or her)!
26. Eight words sum it up—if it harms none, do what you want.

There are other versions of Rede poems. In fact, there is a whole website devoted to the Wiccan Rede. Check it out at www.wiccanrede.dreamhost.com. Whichever version of the Rede you prefer, you must agree that it contains a strong moral code. These principles are central to the Wiccan faith.

def•i•ni•tion

A **pentagram** is a five-pointed star. Four of the five points of the pentagram represent the four Elements—Earth, Air, Water, and Fire. The fifth point stands for Spirit. Made up of five straight lines, the pentagram contains a pentagon inside it. When surrounded by a circle or a pentagon, a pentagram becomes a pentacle. A pentacle is a symbol of the Wiccan faith.

All You Need to Put Yourself in Tune with Magickal Energy

You really don't need much to put yourself in touch with magickal energy. Remember: magick is in you. Magickal energy is something that we all possess.

Magickal Purpose

Before you perform an act of magick, you must be 100 percent clear on why you are doing it. What do you hope to achieve? Why are you using magick? Have you really tried to attain what you want through nonmagickal means? Are you sure that your actions are for the good of all and not just for your own self-interest? Are you sure that your magickal action will not harm anyone? If you come up with clear and positive answers, then you can proceed.

Magickal Concentration

In order to use your magickal energy, you must be able to concentrate. You have to focus intently and visualize the magick—actually see what you want to have happening happen in your mind. When performing an act of magick, you will build up a huge amount of energy with your powers of concentration. Then, when the energy is

really intense, you send that energy out to work for you. Don't worry. You can do this. Here's an exercise that can help you develop your magickal concentration. Imagine the following:

> You are in a kitchen. Feel the ground beneath your feet, smell the scents of the room, see the cabinets and counters. Focus on the counter in front of you and walk right up to it. On the counter, there is a cutting board, a lemon, and a knife. Pick up the lemon. Feel its skin and its weight. Pick up the knife with your other hand and cut the lemon in half. Now raise one half to your lips. Inhale the intense citrus scent. Open your mouth and take a bite of the lemon. Feel the juice gush into your mouth, feel the crisp resistance of the lemon's flesh and peel. Swish the juice around inside your mouth. Notice what it does to your tongue, your cheeks, and your teeth.

Did you start to salivate when reading the paragraph above? If so, that's good. That means that you are focused and able to concentrate. If not, then you will want to practice. Read this lemon visualization into a tape recorder or have a friend read it to you. Sometimes being able to close your eyes really helps. Try to make all the different sensations as real for you as you can. You want to see, feel, and taste the lemon. Your abilities to conjure up the lemon and all its attributes with your mind are the very same powers of concentration that you will use when doing magick.

A Good Finger

Once you have built up your magickal energy, direct the energy where you want it to go. In ritual, Wiccans usually use an athame, a special ritual knife (more about these in Chapter 6). If you don't have an athame, you can use your finger. Remember, the magick is in you, not in the tools that you use.

Banish!

Didn't your mother always tell you it was rude to point? Well, especially so if you are a witch! But seriously, if a person knows that you are a witch, and you point at that person and say something in rhyme, you could really do some damage. Even if you are just kidding, you could hurt that person psychologically. So don't joke about your powers. You also want to avoid intimidating others. Even if you are mad. Even if the person deserves it. Remember the Wiccan Rede, and don't point!

Your Place in the Universe

As a witch, you need to know your place in the universe. You are only a minute part of the whole universe. At the same time, you are connected to every other part of the universe. Everything affects you, and what you do affects everything. No matter how small an action you take, someone, or something, will feel it. If you sneeze in Boise, someone in China will feel it. Each and every thing that you do has an effect, no matter how small.

If you do magick, you can truly change things. None of us can fully comprehend our own power. As a witch, you need to respect this. Remember the image of the stone thrown into a pool of water? Think of the ripples moving out from the center as your energy moving away from you. As the ripples of energy spread out, they affect and alter everything they touch. You can change things. You can have a major impact on people and their lives. With this power comes responsibility—to other people, to animals, to Earth, and to yourself.

The Least You Need to Know

- Witches have ethics. If you are going to be a witch, you must understand the witches' moral code, the Wiccan Rede, and you must try to live by it.
- Living by the Wiccan Rede includes taking care of yourself. Take good care of your body; it is truly your temple.
- Magickal energy lives inside you. To use that energy, you have to learn to concentrate. You also must be totally clear on the reasons why you are using magick. And they better be good reasons!
- All your actions have effects. Especially magickal ones! You might not see the effects immediately or you might not see them at all, but know that everything that you do causes a reaction somewhere in the universe. For this reason, we all must use our powers wisely.

Chapter 6

What You Need to Do Magick

In This Chapter

- Magickal tools—what they are and what they do
- What you'll need and where to find it
- Do clothes make the witch?
- Magickal clothes for magickal work

We've looked within at your motivations for becoming a witch. Now it's time to look at the material things that witches use. Some of the objects we discuss will be familiar to you and some of them will be less so.

If you love "stuff," especially magickal stuff, you'll have a great time reading this chapter. You'll also want to plan to do some shopping. But we'd like to suggest that you read through the chapter before you start making purchases and be prudent in your buying. You don't need to go broke to be a witch!

Secrets of the Witch's Magickal Cabinet

Do you want to see all the secret stuff that's in a witch's magickal cabinet? Of course you do! Well, we can't show you everything, but we will give

you a good idea. You can practice your visualization skills (they're important!) to see what it all looks like. You're not going to find any eye of newt, toe of frog, or fillet of snake, but you will see amulets and candles and chalices and herbs and wands and ....

Choosing Your Magickal Toy Chest

When choosing the things that will be part of your magickal toy chest, remember that the journey, or in this case shopping, is half the fun. You don't need to buy every item that we discuss in this chapter. Let things come to you slowly. Keep some adventure and mystery in the process. Trust your intuition. If you are absolutely drawn to an object and you must have it, well then, that's the one you're supposed to have. On the other hand, if you think you need to buy a chalice, for instance, and you see a few but you don't really like any of them, don't settle and buy one just because you feel you should own one. Look around as you go about your daily activities. You never know what you might find on the street, and those things that you find by "accident" are there just for you.

What Are Magickal Tools?

Magickal tools are any objects used during ritual or while doing magick. They are used only for magick and ritual and for no other purpose. Magickal tools can be fancy items—objects inscribed with magickal symbols or set with stones or crystals—but they don't have to be ornate. In ritual, each tool has symbolic significance. For instance, the athame, a ritual knife, symbolizes the male, and the chalice symbolizes the female. Any object that has been charged with energy to do magick becomes a magickal tool. Because tools are charged to help you do magick, they are not to be used for any other purpose.

def•i•ni•tion

A **poppet** is a magickal doll. Witches concentrate on the magick they want to do while they make a poppet. The word comes from the Middle English word *popet*, which meant "child" or "doll." Today in the United Kingdom, poppet means "a darling." And yes, it is related to our word *puppet*.

How Do You Use Magickal Tools?

Each magickal tool has its own use. The way in which you utilize a given tool depends on the tool and on what kind of magick you want to do. Magickal tools help you to focus your attention and energy. And because the subconscious works with images and symbols, they tell your subconscious mind to get to work, too. When using tools such as herbs, powders, *poppets*, oils, candles, and cords, you focus your energy and put it into the tool. You can then use the tool to hold the energy, or you can use the tool to send the energy out.

For example, if you made a poppet for a child who is ill, you'd put healing energy into it. Then you'd give the poppet full of healing energy to the child. The poppet holds your healing energy and helps the child get better. If you put your energy for finding a new job into a candle, when you light the candle your energy is sent out to the universe to work on your behalf.

Ritual tools—such as the athame and the chalice—are used in celebrating the Wiccan religion. Ritual tools are used during ritual to cast a circle, to represent the Lord and Lady, to welcome deity, to cleanse, to make sacred space, and to cut energy. Ritual tools are not used in the act of magick. Because they represent the Lord and Lady, ritual tools take on great symbolic significance during ritual.

Storing Magickal Tools

You can store your tools in a closet, a wardrobe, a desk with big drawers, or a cardboard box. You don't need to spend a lot of money on something fancy. But you do need to keep your tools in a safe space—a place where other people won't handle them or discover them by accident. You want to be absolutely sure that small children and animals won't get into your stuff. Some of the herbs you acquire may be toxic. This is also true of magickal oils. Some dogs (and children!) have even been known to eat candles!

Besides protecting people from your tools, you need to protect the tools from other people. Because your tools will absorb energy from whoever touches them, only you and people who have your permission should touch them. You also want to make sure that your magickal tools are not used for mundane purposes.

Before you put your tools away, make sure they are clean. Cleaning will get rid of any dust, dirt, or fingerprints. Before using them again, make sure they have been cleansed—more than just cleaning, cleansing will clear the energy from your tools. (See Chapter 9 for directions on how to do this.)

So Mote It Be

Here's one way to make sure no one uses your magickal broom to sweep out the garage. Instead of keeping the broom under lock and key, disguise it. Buy a cinnamon broom, decorate it with dried flowers, herbs, ribbons, or stones. Tie a bow around it, and then hang it on the wall. People will think you have discovered a great piece of folk art! And who would take your wonderfully handcrafted object down from the wall and get it dirty? Only you need to know that this fancy broom is one of your magickal tools.

Witches Love Toys!

We all like stuff, right? Especially cool stuff, and witches are no exception. If you have visited a metaphysical store, you've probably seen the wide variety of paraphernalia, magickal tools, and all-around great stuff you can buy. If you have not been by your local metaphysical store, you're in for a treat!

A Basic Magickal Inventory for Beginners

The most common mistake a new witch makes is to run out and buy a huge amount of magickal things. Resist the temptation to whip out your credit card and buy one of every item that you see at the metaphysical store. The same goes for online shopping. We know, it looked like such a good deal. But if you don't really need it, it's not a good deal, no matter how low the price! You'll want to get some stuff, but keep it reasonable. Some tools you may not need for years, and others you may not need at all. And some products—such as essential oils—don't keep. You don't want to be stuck with a closet full of rancid oil! As you meet people and learn magick, your collection of supplies will grow and grow. You'll buy what you need as you need it. Don't worry about having the "right" stuff right away.

You can always use simple things. If you don't have an athame for ritual, you can use your two fingers held together, or use a wand. You can draw a pentagram on a piece of paper for your altar instead of buying one. You will need candles and bowls for salt and water. You should have a broom to sweep out the energy in your ritual space. If you don't have a censer for burning your incense, you can use a small cauldron. Or use a ceramic dish with some sand in the bottom. You don't have to go broke and buy a carload of things. Start small and build up slowly.

This is a beginner's list of ritual tools. Witches often start out with one object to represent each Element or direction and objects to represent the God and the Goddess.

- An **athame** is a double-edge knife, approximately six inches in length, that is used in ritual to represent the God. Originally, athames were not forged from metals, but were wooden and were taken from trees. Athames are usually dull because they are never used to cut anything but energy. Traditionally, athames had black handles. Some are plain, and some are very fancy. The athame is often associated with the Element Air.
- A **Book of Shadows** is your personal magickal book. In it you record your spells, magickal information, dreams, chants, or any other material that has to do with your workings in the Craft.

- The **cauldron** represents the womb of the Goddess and is used for cooking or burning incense in as well as *scrying* and holding safely things to be used in ritual or magick.
- **Chalices** are cups or fancy mugs that represent the Goddess. They are also associated with the Element Water. A chalice is used in doing the great rite—a symbolic unification of the male and female in which an athame is lowered into a chalice, blessing the wine or water. Many witches own more than one chalice.

def•i•ni•tion

Scrying is a kind of divination. To **scry** means to look at an object in such a way that the conscious mind becomes quiet. In that quiet, it becomes possible to see things that haven't happened yet. Water held in a cauldron is often used for scrying. So are crystal balls and candle flames.

- **Incense** comes in stick, cone, and powder form. It is used in Air magick—magick in which you call upon the Element Air—and to cleanse magickal tools and sacred space.
- A **pentagram** can be used as jewelry. It is also placed on the altar for protection. It is associated with the Element Earth.
- A **wand,** which can be made from a variety of materials, is used to direct energy. It often is associated with the Element Fire.

You can be a witch and do magick dressed in street clothes and with no special equipment at all. As you get more experience in the Craft, you may want to have more magickal supplies to enhance your practice. Here are some examples of magickal objects that you may find useful and fun.

- A **bell** is used in ritual when calling in the quarters and deity (asking the four directions and the God and Goddess to join you). At the end of ritual, the bell is rung to let the Elements return to their realms.
- A **censer** is a special container used to burn incense. Censers often have feet so the heat they contain will not scorch the surface upon which they rest. Some censers have chains attached on top so that you can lift them easily and spread the smoke from the incense around the room.
- **Cords** of different thickness and colors are used to do binding magick.
- **Divination tools** such as Tarot cards, runes, pendulums, and the *I-Ching* are used to look into the future, to aid you in decision making, and in doing magick. It is best to learn more than one type of divination.

- **Herbs** are used in healing and in magick, and can include dried plants or spices, dried corn, and even tobacco.
- A **magick mirror** is a mirror that has been cleansed, treated with herbs, and magickally charged to help you see things as they really are or as they should be.
- **Statues,** which represent the God or Goddess you are working with, are usually placed on the altar.

For More Advanced Magick

When you get more advanced, you'll want to start collecting herbs, stones, and oils. After some time, you will be able to formulate spells at a moment's notice. You'll be able to do this because you will have learned all about the various energies that flow from your magickal tools. Not only will you understand the energy, but you will know how to make it work. And you will know it because it feels right.

The more you work with magick, the more you become adept at working with Spirit. The more you work with Spirit, the more connected to Spirit you will become. Spirit will start to guide you in your magickal workings and in your life. As your magickal work gets deeper, you will come to write your own spells, rituals, prayers, and Esbat and Sabbat celebrations. You will learn to make your own talismans and magickal tools and be able to focus your energy in the blink of an eye.

Where to Find Magickal Stuff

There are lots of places to find magickal tools—stores, catalogs, and online. You can also find great magickal stuff at flea markets and even in your own backyard! Or you can get creative, make like a crafty witch, and build your own.

Metaphysical Stores, Catalogs, and the Internet

When shopping at a metaphysical store, compare prices. And make sure the store you buy from is a place where you feel welcome. You'll also want to shop at a store with a knowledgeable sales staff. You should be able to ask questions and get answers. If they can't answer your questions, they should offer to find out for you or refer you to someone who can help you. Ideally, you want to shop at a store that has a witch working in it.

Banish!

If you go into a store with a list of things that you plan to buy and the staff tries to convince you that the magick you plan to do can't possibly be done without several additional expensive items, stay clear of that store. They could be trying to sell you things that you don't need. Also beware of a store that tries to sell you everything once they find out that you are a new witch. The best kind of metaphysical store is one where they tell you to slow down. You don't need to buy everything. And you certainly don't need to buy it all at once.

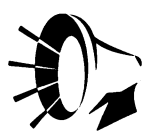
Catalogs can be great and very educational. For new witches, catalog shopping can have drawbacks, though. It's not always easy to get your questions about a catalog item answered. Prices in catalogs can be good, but remember to add the shipping and handling costs.

There are thousands of Internet sites that sell magickal stuff. Again, make sure you shop around. Most sites carry a lot of the same merchandise. And just like with catalogs, there isn't always someone to answer your questions, and you need to know what it is you want.

Flea Markets and Found Objects

Flea markets are excellent places to find magickal stuff. That weird metal pot with three legs at the antique shop? It's a cauldron. Take it home and, before you do anything else, cleanse it. (We'll tell you how to do that in Chapter 9.) You need to remove any old energy that is sticking to your new treasure. If you don't cleanse a magickal object before your use it, old energy stuck to the object may mess up your magick.

Found objects—things that you literally find—are often gifts from Nature. You could be walking down the street and come upon a raven or duck feather lying on the ground waiting for you. Or you could find a rock with a perfect hole through it. Or a fallen branch that would make the perfect wand. Found objects can also be someone else's trash. It's really true that one person's trash is another person's treasure! You could find a pair of deer



Banish!

Resist the temptation to cut a branch from a tree when the tree is in bloom. Yes, it looks pretty all covered with blossoms, but taking a branch at that time could hurt the tree. It's better to wait until fall or winter when the tree has gone dormant.

antlers, a symbol that represents the Lord, that someone else has no mundane (or magickal) use for! Take them home, cleanse them, and put them to good use.

Magick Craft: Making Your Own

Usually, when people make their own magickal tools, they gather their materials from Nature. If you take something from Nature, you need to give something back. If you take a branch from a living tree to make a wand, you should then give the tree some compost, fertilizer, or a good long drink of water. Or leave out some breadcrumbs for the birds. If you do cut something from a living plant, make sure that you do it in the right season so as not to hurt the plant.

The beach and the banks of rivers are great places to look for materials for crafting your own magickal instruments. Rocks that have been smoothed in the water can make great runes—stones with magickal letters drawn on them—and divination tools. (Read more about runes in Chapter 17.) The earth will give you all kinds of things. Scallop shells can make great bowls for your altar. If you find a piece of wood with a flat surface, you can inscribe it with a pentagram. If you keep your eyes open, you will find things. Just refrain from picking every wildflower in the meadow!

Oh, What to Wear? What to Wear?

Do clothes make the witch? Well, we wouldn't say that. But clothes certainly do have a function in witchcraft. And they do more than just keep you warm. Just like magickal tools, magickal clothing can help you to focus your mind. Clothes can also help create a mood and enhance energy, and they can be fun.

From High Priests and Priestesses to Covenmaids

The High Priest and Priestess of a coven often wear crowns. Sometimes the other members of the coven wear jeweled headbands and sometimes not. In some covens, the High Priest and Priestess change the color of their robes to symbolize the change in the seasons, while the rest of the coven wears the same color robes throughout the year. They also may have special robes for performing special ceremonies, such as initiations, Wiccanings (child blessings), or handfastings (Wiccan weddings).

A coven that wears robes usually decides what kind of robes all of the members are going to wear. The robes all may be identical, or they may just all be the same color.

In some covens, the color of the cord around the robe denotes the magickal degree an individual has attained. As a solitary witch, you can decide what to wear and when to wear it.

Can Witches Do Magick in Street Clothes?

You can do magick in street clothes. You can also do ritual in street clothes. As a beginner, however, it will be really difficult for you to keep your mind sufficiently focused when you are surrounded by mundane things. When you become more adept, you will be able to maintain your concentration better and will have greater success performing magick in street clothes.

Secrets of the Witch's Wardrobe Closet

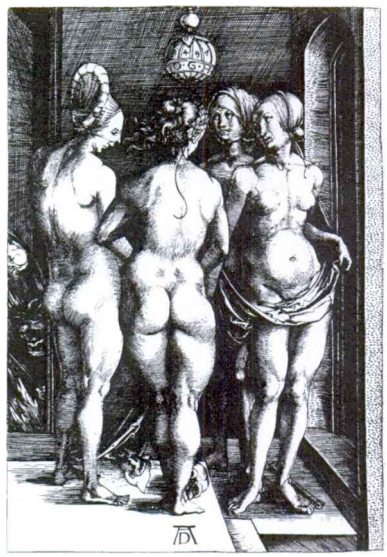
Remember how we said that you don't want to use your magickal broom for a mundane purpose like sweeping out the garage? Well, the same is true of your wardrobe. Okay, we know you probably wouldn't go clean the garage in a silk dress. The point is, when you put on an article of clothing from your magickal closet, it tells your subconscious mind it has magick to do. So keep your magickal clothes special. That way you'll be sure that your subconscious gets the right message at the right time.

A Cloak of Stars: Skyclad

As we first mentioned in Chapter 3, some covens and solitaires prefer to practice magick and ritual skyclad, or naked. Many witches feel that clothing restricts their energy, so they feel better working without clothes. Working skyclad can also help you to accept your body as natural. Once you get used to it, just seeing your body and feeling the air on your skin can be very liberating. Some covens go skyclad for the same reason that Catholic-school kids wear uniforms—it emphasizes that everyone in the circle is equal.

So Mote It Be

Before you attend a coven meeting, find out if they practice skyclad or robed. If they do practice skyclad, bring along a robe just in case. You may want something that you can slip into and out of quickly. And you may have to walk some distance from where you leave your street clothes to the spot where the ritual will be held. If the coven practices robed, ask what you should wear. Chances are you can pull out that little black robe you've been saving for just such an occasion.



A Renaissance depiction of four skyclad witches by the German master Albrecht Dürer, 1497.

Robes, Dresses, Hoods, and Shoes

Many solitary witches like to wear purple because it is a magickal color. During the summer, you might wear green to symbolize the Goddess and Earth all in leaf. You can pick a color to correspond with the type of magick or ritual you are going to do. Or you can pick a color just because it looks good on you. Whatever you wear, remember to keep that outfit (or outfits) for magick and ritual only. Keep your magickal clothes magickal by keeping them special.

When choosing an outfit, keep in mind that you will be working around candles and open flames. Your clothing should be made of cotton or a cotton blend as they are not nearly as flammable as synthetics. What's worse, many synthetics melt as they burn and ... well, ouch! Also, be careful of wide sleeves that will dangle down into the flames.

If you decide to wear robes, you can dress them up by sewing on magickal symbols or embroidering them. You can even make your own robes. Some witches like to wear robes with hoods. The hood is really useful when you are working in a group. If you're having trouble concentrating, pull your hood up, and like a horse with blinders on, you'll be able to see only the thing you need to focus on and won't be distracted by the people on either side of you. The cord that you wear as a belt around your robe can be the same color as your robe or a contrasting one. The cord at your waist can also hold your athame, pouches, charms, or medicine bags.

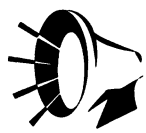
Many witches do not wear underwear under their robes. (Say that three times fast!) Witches also typically do not wear shoes when doing magick or ritual. Being barefoot gives you greater access to the earth's energy and can help you feel more grounded.

The Ultimate Accessory: Jewelry

Like your magickal clothes, you want to keep your magickal jewelry for magickal occasions. You should not wear magickal jewelry for your regular day-to-day activities. That jewelry should be worn only during ritual or when doing magick.

In a coven, usually only the High Priest and Priestess wear crowns. As a solitaire, you are the Priestess or Priest, so you can wear a crown, too. Witches often wear magickal rings, pendants, or barrettes to hold back the hair. Medicine bags or pouches worn around the neck are also popular.

The metals you choose can be important. Gold jewelry represents the Lord, while silver stands for the Lady. Some witches wear both kinds for a balance between the Lord and Lady. Others choose to wear only gold or only silver. The designs you choose in jewelry also have significance. Images of the Moon are images of the Goddess. The Sun represents the God.



Banish!

Resist the temptation to touch someone else's magickal jewelry. Just as you don't want people to touch your magickal tools, another witch doesn't want you to touch her necklace. Touch someone else's things only if that person has given you permission to do so.

Adorning with Body Art

Many witches who work skyclad paint magickal symbols on their bodies with washable body paint. Sometimes the designs relate to the magick that the witch is doing. Other witches get tattoos that tell the world what type of magick they are into. Tattoos can also represent totem animals, fantasy creatures, or Nature itself.

The Least You Need to Know

- The most common mistake a new witch makes is to buy too much stuff. Acquire your tools slowly. Enjoy the process and see how many of your magickal things come to you.
- Don't let anyone sell you things you don't need. Also, don't convince yourself to buy something that you don't really like just because you think you need it.

- Make sure to keep your magickal tools in a safe place away from children and people who might try to use them for mundane purposes, or handle them and leave their energy behind.
- Keep your magickal clothes and jewelry special. Don't wear them for everyday use.

Chapter 7

Observing Ritual the Wiccan Way

In This Chapter

- Performing Wiccan ritual
- Working with a group or solitary
- Preparing your body, mind, and spirit for magick
- What's involved in Wiccan rituals
- Keeping records—your grimoire and your Book of Shadows
- Life after death?

Most religions use ritual in some way. Wicca is no exception. In Wicca, as in many other faiths, you do ritual to honor deity. But in Wicca you can do magick as part of your ritual, and you can even write your own ritual.

As you practice ritual and become more familiar with the steps involved, your sense of spirituality will grow and expand, and you will come to feel more and more connected to the All. You will discover that as you become more spiritual, your life will start to change. With your connection to

deity, you will feel a sense of healing of your deepest self. You will learn to appreciate and connect to the world around you and all the wonderful gifts that the Lord and Lady have given us.

What Is a Wiccan Ritual?

A Wiccan ritual is a means of creating consecrated ground or sacred space in order to pay homage to deity. Ritual is also used to do magick and to work with the energy of the God and Goddess. Ritual consists of a set of actions that are performed in a particular order. While there is a basic structure to rituals, they can be changed and varied to some extent.

Ritual is also a time when Wiccans get together with other people whom they trust. Within the ritual circle, individuals in the group can share their thoughts and feelings. Anything said within the circle must be kept confidential.

Why Perform a Magick Ritual?

People perform ritual for the same reasons they go to church. Ritual is special, and it gives you a taste of the sacred. Ritual puts you in a state of mind in which you can relate on a personal level to deity. It creates the necessary conditions for you to perform magick. It also allows you to connect with others in a spiritual way. Performing ritual creates order and harmony in your life. It is a way to nurture and heal yourself. It also helps you live by a moral standard. Doing ritual will enable your energy and allow you to pull upon the energy of the God and Goddess. Ritual will help you focus and keep things in perspective. While doing ritual, you might realize just how small you and your problems really are.

Webweaving

Societies all over the world and throughout time have performed rituals to bring order into their lives. Witches are no different. Perform a ritual to ground yourself, to connect with the goddess, to celebrate a Sabbat, to honor your ancestors, or to perform magick.

Inside the ritual space, you'll feel safe. It's a perfect place to meditate. If you do ritual alone, it also gives you a great opportunity to sit back, look at your life, and get some clarity. In such a situation, there's no hiding between you and deity. At times like that, the God and Goddess can really get in there and help you figure out what you need to do.

When to Do Ritual

Wiccans perform ritual in circle in honor of the holidays—the Esbats, which are celebrated once a month, and the Sabbats, which occur about every six weeks. (Read more about Esbats and Sabbats later in this chapter, and more extensively in Chapters 13 and 14.) Witches also get together in circle for ritual any time they want to formally honor the Lord and Lady, or when the group wants to do magick. But ritual does not have to be confined to special occasions. You can do ritual when you have a problem you need to work out, when you want to connect with something larger than yourself, when you're feeling empty, or when you need to heal. You can do ritual when you feel you need the energy of the Lord and Lady to help you, or if you are planning to do some major magickal work. You can use ritual when you need to think about your life in a safe space. This can help you deal with any issues that may come up and help make your life complete.

So Mote It Be

It's a good idea to do a small ritual every day to honor the Lord and Lady. After your morning shower, light a candle and sit in front of it. Just a 10-minute meditation every day will remind you that deity is in your life. And you can remind deity that you are here, too! Then you can go about your business. This little dose of daily ritual will help put order and purpose back into your life, and you'll be amazed at how much it will help you deal with all the stresses of your day.

When Not to Do Ritual

Avoid participating in ritual when you are sick. If you are working with other people, you will be in close quarters and will just give them the bug that you are harboring. Doing ritual when you aren't feeling well, even when alone, isn't a good idea. We all tend to be cranky and distracted when we are sick. You want to be able to keep the full force of your attention on the ritual work with which you are involved. In addition, ritual demands a lot of your energy. You want to be able to give 100 percent. If you can't, then it's best to wait until you're feeling better.

It's also not a good idea to do ritual when you are very tired or in a hurry. Ritual needs your undivided attention. It's hard to stay focused when you are nodding off or worrying about running out to pick up the kids after soccer practice.

Another time to avoid doing ritual is when you are angry. Anger can send your energies off in undesirable directions or just take your focus away from the work at hand.

It also puts a strain on the other members of the circle. They won't be able to relax when there are negative energies zipping about. You also want to make sure that you are comfortable with all the people in the ritual circle. If you are in the middle of a feud with one of them, don't do ritual with that person. Or if you feel that you don't share the same beliefs with other people in the circle, don't participate. Remember, you want to be in the ritual circle "in perfect love and perfect trust."

Before you start ritual, make sure that you feel okay, that you're well rested, and that you don't have issues with any of the people with whom you are going to be doing ritual. This will help to keep your focus where it should be and help to ensure that everyone has a good ritual experience.

All Kinds of Wiccan Ceremonies, Rites, and Rituals

Because Wicca is a religion, there are many different Wiccan rituals and ceremonies to mark the many sacred passages in our lives. There are rituals for death, for entering the faith, for joining people together in love, for child blessing, for initiation, for magick, for healing, and for celebrating Esbats and Sabbats. You can do ritual alone or with a group. The choice is yours.

Performing Ritual as a Group

In a coven, the High Priest and Priestess lead ritual. Often coven members are assigned jobs—calling in *the quarters*, lighting the candles, or ringing the bell. If you get together with a group of solitaires to perform ritual, usually someone will take on the role of the High Priest and someone will act as High Priestess. You might be assigned to call in the quarters or to bring cake, wine, candles, or incense. Or your job might be to help set up or clean up.

def•i•ni•tion

Calling down **the quarters** is another way of inviting the four directions—North, East, South, and West—and the Elemental powers—Earth, Air, Fire, and Water—with which they are associated into your ritual.

Covens meet to perform ritual together regularly—for the 13 Esbats and the 8 Sabbats. Some may work together at other times as well. Groups of solitaires can work together if they have something they all want to do. Some solitaires meet for the holiday rituals as well. Or they can do ritual together for a common purpose—a healing, some magick that needs to be done, or to celebrate a special occasion such as a Wiccaning or handfasting. But most of the time they work alone, hence the name "solitaire."

Ritual Solitaire Style

As a solitaire, you design your own ritual for specific purposes and can emphasize elements of the ceremony that appeal to you. And you can wear whatever you want—robes, a fancy outfit, or you can go skyclad. Working on your own, your ritual will not be as elaborate as one performed in a group. Because you are on your own and must do everything yourself, you need to be organized. When you are planning your ritual, make a checklist so you can be sure that you have everything you will need. Go over the list before you start your ritual and gather all your tools together. You don't want to keep cutting a hole in your magick circle to go find things. (Read more about entering and leaving a magick circle in Chapter 11.)

Avoid becoming overly casual in your ritual. Yes, as a solitaire, you can do what you want and you can wear what you want, but ritual is still ritual. A little formality and organization will show your respect for the God and Goddess. It'll also help you maintain respect for yourself.

Moon Magick: Esbats

There are 13 Esbats, or Wiccan Moon rituals, every year. At this time, witches honor the Goddess in ritual. You can celebrate an Esbat at almost any time of the month. You can honor the Goddess when the Moon is full and her energies are at their peak. If you want to do magick and draw on her strength, the full Moon is a great time to get her help in achieving your heart's desire. Or you can celebrate an Esbat on the waxing Moon, a good time to bring positive things toward you, or on the waning Moon, a time to get rid of the negative. (See Chapter 13.)

Sacred Times: The Witches' Sabbats

There are eight Sabbats a year. On the Sabbats, witches work with the God in ritual. Sabbats mark certain natural events—the solstices and equinoxes, and the midpoints between these occurrences. Some Sabbats are celebrated in the daytime and others are observed at night. (See Chapter 14.)

Making Magick Takes Preparation: Body, Mind, and Spirit

Before you do magick in ritual, you have to be prepared. You have to know the intent of your magick, and you have to be sure that you will be working at a good time.

Then you have to get all your tools together. Go over your checklist to be sure that nothing is missing and check to make sure your robe or outfit is clean. Prepare the room that you are going to use by moving the furniture, if necessary. Unplug the phone so no one will interrupt you, and take off your watch so it and thoughts of your busy day don't distract you.

Here are some additional steps you may want to take to prepare yourself for ritual:

- Fast during the day. Many people don't eat all day before ritual, but drink juice to keep their blood sugar up. If, however, you are on a special diet because of a health condition, please stay on that prescribed program.
- Take a ritual bath. Use special soaps and oils. Allow the water to help you feel grounded.
- Meditate and visualize the magick you are going to be doing.

After you have bathed, dress yourself in your ritual outfit and magick jewelry. Ground yourself by feeling your connection with Earth and cleanse the area you'll be working in. Now you're ready to start your ritual.

All the Parts of a Wiccan Ritual

There are many elements that are common to all Wiccan rituals. We'll list them in order here and tell you about each in greater detail in coming chapters.

To perform ritual, you ...

- Decide to do it.
- Cast a magick circle.
- Focus your mind.
- Call in the quarters.
- Call in deity.
- State your reason for doing ritual.
- Work magick, if that is what you need to do.
- Perform the great rite. In a solitary ritual, you don't need to do this. The High Priest and High Priestess of a coven perform this aspect of ritual, which represents the union of the male and the female aspects of the All.

- Partake of cakes and wine. Cakes in the context of ritual doesn't necessarily mean big gooey chocolate confections. You, or the coven you visit, could use cookies, crackers, or bread. The cakes are a ceremonial snack that the group shares and for which they give thanks to the Goddess.
- Relax and communicate with others in the circle.
- Refocus.
- Say farewell to the quarters and deity.
- Take down the circle.

So Mote It Be

Some covens or traditions prefer to take down the circle before sharing cakes and ale. They use this as a grounding or a bonding time. There is no single right way, so whatever your group prefers is fine.

How to Design a Wiccan Ritual

As you learn more about Wicca, you'll want to start to design your own rituals. You'll become familiar with the structure of ritual and soon all the elements will fall into place naturally. Before you start writing, you may want to consider a few other topics that could have a bearing on what you do and how you act during ritual.

A Guide to Wiccan Ritual Etiquette

If you keep in mind that a Wiccan ritual is a serious religious rite, you shouldn't have too much trouble observing proper etiquette. When you are doing ritual with other people, make sure you aren't late. If you've been told they plan to start at 7:30, arrive at 7 so you have time to change into your ritual outfit and to chat. Make sure you have brought all the things you said you'd bring. If you were supposed to bring the candles and you leave them on your kitchen table, you will have ruined ritual for everyone. If you have allergies or can't drink wine, bring your own beverage and snack so you can partake at the proper moment. As a guest, always ask if there is something you can bring—just the way you would if you were going to someone's home.

Before ritual starts, make sure you have removed your watch, cell phone, and pager. Double-check your bag to make sure your watch, pager, and cell phone won't make any noise. Nothing can ruin concentration during ritual like a ringing phone.

Be polite and respectful to other people in the circle. If someone makes a mistake, try not to giggle. Stay focused on ritual and don't joke or goof around. If you know that someone you absolutely can't get along with will be in the circle, don't participate. Wait until the two of you have patched things up instead of spoiling ritual for everyone with your negative energies. If you suddenly need to leave the circle because you are feeling ill or are very uncomfortable, ask the High Priest and High Priestess to cut a door in the circle for you so you can leave.

Inviting Friends and Family to Share

Covens usually work in a closed circle. In other words, only members of the coven can attend their rituals. Some covens occasionally hold open rituals in which others can participate. A ceremony such as a handfasting (wedding) or Wiccaning (child blessing) might be conducted in an open circle so that the friends and family of the people involved can be there.

As a solitaire, you can invite a special friend or family member to join you in your ritual circle. You might want to do that if you are going to be doing healing work. Before you do invite your special person, make sure he or she is of like mind and really understands what Wicca is all about. If you are going to do magick within your ritual, chances are your friends and family will not understand. In such a case, it is probably better not to invite anyone to join you.

Animals Join In

When you do ritual, animals can move in and out of the circle as they please. Because animals have pure energy and they enter the circle in perfect love and perfect trust, they can join you at any time in any ritual. If you have a familiar—animals or even plants with which you can psychically communicate—it will want to participate. One cat familiar we know won't leave the circle till someone cuts a door for him! (For more about familiars, see Chapter 15.)

Grimoires and Books of Shadows

You will want to keep records of your rituals. Writing down what you have done and when you did it will allow you to keep track of your successes and failures. Remember there are no rules to follow in creating your journal. The book needs to speak to you and you alone.

A witch's journal is called a *Book of Shadows*. A witch's recipe book is called a *grimoire*. It's best to have two books, especially as you're starting out, but it isn't required. If you choose to use just one journal to encompass everything, you will want to keep it private. Your Book of Shadows is for your eyes only—it is your witch's diary. Your grimoire can more readily be shared with other witches.

Think of your Book of Shadows as a place to record your private thoughts and concerns as well as ritual outcomes. As you grow spiritually, this record can remind you how far you've come. Your grimoire is a sort of how-to book. In this book you list recipes, spells, and the mundane aspects of ritual like dates, moon phases, and who else participated. The content of these two books will certainly overlap but you want to make sure that your most private spiritual thoughts are in the book you don't share.

def•i•ni•tion

A **Book of Shadows** (BOS) can be anything from a hardbound leather book to a spiral notebook or a sheaf of papers. It isn't necessary to spend a lot of money. You can customize your book by decorating the cover or by drawing illustrations. The book only has to be meaningful to *you*. A **grimoire** is like a Book of Shadows, but not as personal. It holds information about ritual, spells, potions, and how to prepare magickal tools. It can also contain lists of angels, spirits, and the magickal properties of objects found in Nature. Most witches use the term Book of Shadows generically to refer to both types of books.

Witches' Knowledge: What to Put in Your BOS

If you've kept a diary in the past, you may think of it as a chore. Or, you might look at keeping a Book of Shadows as a daily way to explore your feelings or to meditate and ponder what's important to you about Wicca and being Wiccan. Consider writing in your BOS a joyful task as you record your journey down the new spiritual path of Wicca. Don't forget to include photographs, bits of poetry, chants, or even pictures cut out of magazines. Write in different colored ink. Tape in dried flowers or grasses so that your book becomes a work of art, of magick, not just a mundane record.

Remember there are no rules to follow. Just plunge ahead and see what works for you.

Writing About Ritual in Your Book of Shadows

Samhain Celebration, 10/31/2005, Waning Moon

I offered to host our annual bonfire, which made me very nervous! I'm not the world's best hostess, and I've been so busy lately and pre-occupied with mundane matters, but everyone pitched in to help and I looked forward to connecting again with spirit and remembering that life is about more than what happens on the earth plane. Guests started arriving at 6:00 P.M. Sarah, Gina, Starshine, and Wick arrived first and helped set up the pyre. We used the rock circle to contain it and made sure there was no dried brush around it. Because I live outside the city limits, we don't need permission to have an open flame, which is why everyone likes it when I host. But it's fine not to build a fire when we're in the city. We usually just light candles instead. (Note: Next time, have more water on hand to put out sparks!)

Other guests: Greg, Storch, Meena, Capris, Blythe and friend (don't remember his name—shame on me), Alice, and Bob.

We cast the traditional circle, which included the altar but left the bonfire on the outside, called down the quarters, and welcomed in the ancestors. Each guest placed a token on the altar (which is actually an oak tree stump) to honor the spirits who cross over to be with us during Samhain. I used Aunt Rose's handkerchief along with Rita's house key.

We used this incantation:

> *Into this circle of friends*
> *we invite friends and family who have gone before.*
> *May they join us in this joyous celebration.*
> *Goddess and God, enter in and bless our endeavors*
> *this night and throughout the year.*
> *So mote it be.*

I felt very close to Rita but I didn't really feel a connection with Aunt Rose this time. Maybe she was visiting a different celebration. (P.S. Two days later, Rita's husband gave me her silver locket. He said he just felt like she would want me to have it. It's what I had asked her for in order to keep her spirit close to me. She bought it on our last spring break together.) Afterward we each reclaimed our tokens and thanked the spirits for joining us.

We didn't have a magickal intention other than celebrating the Sabbat so the ceremony was a short one. Meena talked about her mother who just passed a few weeks ago and we asked the Goddess to bless her spirit. Meena said she could smell her mother's

perfume and felt comforted that she had joined us. We released the spirits and took down the circle.

I felt as though there was some tension between Bob and Sarah. I'm afraid I'm going to have to talk to them about bringing their differences into the circle. Maybe it's time for them to do a friendship ritual together. I'll suggest it to them. If they can bond spiritually their mundane differences won't matter. I felt distracted throughout the ritual. Not the way I wanted to feel this evening!

For cakes and ale we had pumpkin bread, sesame crackers topped with black olive pate, and hot apple cider. (We had agreed a full-fledged feast was too expensive this year.) Afterwards, Wick pulled out his fiddle and we danced around the bonfire. Sarah made witch scarves for each of us as gifts so we knotted them together for the dance.

The weather started out clear and balmy, in the upper '60s, but around 9:30 P.M. it started to sprinkle. For one brief minute I wondered if my cloudy feelings were causing the weather change. Then, Capris said the same thing out loud and about four other people chimed in, "Me, too!" We all laughed so the evening ended on a high note as we let the light of the bonfire shine through the mist and clear our hearts and minds. Here's the extra water we needed to quench our Fire!

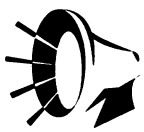
Recording the Ritual in Your Grimoire

The corresponding grimoire pages would most likely include the date and place of the ritual or meal, the moon phase, the names of the guests and the recipes for the cider, the pumpkin bread, and the pate. You might want to include the magickal correspondences for the spices and ingredients you used. The spell would be recorded and perhaps a list of the items each person placed on the altar. If the altar was special for the celebration, a description of it would be included.

If you always cast a magick circle the same way each time you do Wiccan ritual, it isn't necessary to record how you did it in your grimoire each time. (See Chapter 11 to learn how to cast a circle.) You might want to have a section of the grimoire that includes your standard rituals. It's also handy to number the pages of your grimoire and keep a running index. This is most easily done on a computer so you can add entries, but if you don't have access to a computer, use note cards. Put each recipe page number on a card, each ritual, each Sabbat, each spell. Use a recipe box to sort your cards. This way you can find what you need at a glance.

Any other details that would help you remember how to recreate a celebration would be appropriate to include. Remember this is a book you might want to share so comments about your guests or your own feelings would not be included in your

grimoire. (See Appendix B for a Magickal Record form to record your spells and for more on your grimoire.)



Banish!

When you record something in your grimoire you will want to be careful about naming names. Many witches have a ritual name they use during meetings or for spellcasting to protect their identities. There are still prejudicial people in the world who frown on Wiccans. It's best to keep your fellow witches' mundane names secret.

Where to Keep Your BOS and Who Should See It

Because your Book of Shadows contains information about your magickal workings, it is a special and sacred object. Give it a place of honor, the way you would for a family Bible. Most people keep their Book of Shadows hidden in the cabinet with their magickal tools. You want to be sure your book is safe, that no one will make fun of it, play with it, deface it, or destroy it. Your book is private, and only you or another witch whom you have authorized should see it. You want to be sure that whoever does see your book won't disclose its contents to anyone or do anything to harm the book or you.

Beyond This Life

What happens when you die? Where does the spirit go? And what does it do when it gets there? Questions such as these have been central to human consciousness since time immemorial. Wiccans have a number of answers to each of these questions. Hey, you knew there couldn't be just one answer.

Final Resting Place?

Are you afraid of graveyards? Witches usually are not. Some even use gravesites in magick. Of course, there are two schools of thought about graves. Some witches believe that there is no point in working with graves because the person who is buried there is not really there. Their spirit has reincarnated, so there is nothing in the grave but an empty shell. Other witches believe that cemeteries have special energy because people visit them to remember their dead. Also, the ground of a graveyard has been consecrated and is a sacred space.

To make yourself more comfortable, you might want to spend some time visiting graveyards. Pack a picnic. Read the headstones and learn about the people buried there. If you find a stone you particularly like, make a gravestone rubbing to take home. (First check that rubbings are allowed—some cemeteries forbid them because of possible damage to old stones.) Soon you will feel comfortable and will see graveyards as simply the place where the body goes after death.

Webweaving

Wiccans believe that all animals have souls. The souls of animals are so pure that they have no lessons to learn in this life. They are just here to enjoy life. Yup, that is exactly what your cat is doing when she is chasing string or stretching in that sunny spot by the window.

The Summerland Beckons

The Summerland is not heaven and it is not hell. Witches who believe in the Summerland think of it as a place of reflection for the spirit. After death, spirits think about the lives they have just lived and plan where they will come back next. Some spirits decide not to reincarnate, but to remain and act as a spirit guide for those they love. Ultimately, each spirit, after it has learned all it needs to learn and taught what it needs to teach, is reunited with the All. In each lifetime, the spirit advances toward this ultimate goal.

When you enter the Summerland, sometimes you sleep and reflect for a long time to recover from difficult life experiences. Other souls don't spend much time resting because they are anxious to continue their journey on Earth.

def•i•ni•tion

Some witches believe **the Summerland** is where spirits go after death to rest and reflect in the company of the God and Goddess, and to decide how they are going to reincarnate. In Wicca there is no heaven or hell.

Reincarnation: Rebirth

After the soul has rested, it decides when to reincarnate. Each soul chooses who it will be and what lesson it will learn in its new lifetime. Once it has reincarnated, it doesn't remember what its lesson is, but must find out by living through all the experiences of its new life. If a soul doesn't wish to reincarnate right away, it may become a spirit guide. Or if it does not need to reincarnate, it will reunite with the Goddess.

Some witches believe the ideas of Edgar Cayce (1877–1945), that spirits travel through time in groups or soul families. Thus, we know each other over several lifetimes. Maybe next time you will know your spouse, not as your partner, but as your boss or your child's teacher. Others believe that we do meet the same spirits again, but that each spirit moves on its own.

Of course many witches don't believe in reincarnation at all or have decided to reserve judgment until they see it with their own eyes. Some see the God and Goddess as aspects of an energy of connection rather than actual entities. Are they less Wiccan because they don't hold the classical and accepted Wiccan reality? Of course not! Real Wiccans understand that everyone has to find their own spiritual answers.

We each have a job to do in this lifetime. We have things to learn and things to teach. If a young man dies, people often ask, "Why did he have to go?" The Wiccan answer would be because his job was done. He'd learned what he needed and taught what he needed to teach. Sometimes the death of a young person can help the people around him or her to grow. In that respect, the death was not senseless. There was a reason for it.

After the person is gone, the effects of that life continue in the lives of everyone who was touched by that person and by that person's actions. The person's spirit moves on to the Summerland and is reborn into a new life of spiritual lessons and teachings.

The Least You Need to Know

- Ritual is a time to get in touch with the God and Goddess. You can use ritual to heal, to do magick, or to celebrate a Sabbat or Esbat.
- To do ritual, you must prepare and organize yourself and your equipment.
- It's important to record your rituals so you know what you have done and so you can keep track of the efficacy of your magick.
- Use a Book of Shadows or a grimoire, or both, to record your magickal business. Put your spells, chants, and rituals in your grimoire. Write down your personal musings, the results of your magickal acts, and whatever else you want to include in your Book of Shadows, which is for your eyes only.
- Some Wiccans believe that we die after accomplishing our goals. Then we go to the Summerland to rest and choose our next incarnation. We reincarnate until we have perfected our knowledge, then we are reabsorbed into the All.

Part 3 So You Want to Do Magick?

It's almost time for magick. By now, you know that magick is all about preparation, concentration, and focus, focus, focus. Before you start casting spells, though, you may want to commit to your Wiccan faith by dedicating yourself to the Craft. We'll show you how to do that and explain how to prepare yourself and your space for ritual. You'll learn about taking a magickal name, casting magick circles, working with the energy of pentacles, pentagrams, and more.

Chapter 8

Dedicate Yourself to the Craft

In This Chapter

- What's in a magickal name?
- Finding your magickal name
- Your magickal name and numerology
- All about dedication
- Do-it-yourself dedication

If you're serious about Wicca and witchcraft, dedication is your next step. Dedication is an exciting and serious commitment. It means that you have chosen to walk the Wiccan path. When you dedicate, you make a personal commitment to the Lord and Lady.

You can dedicate as a solitaire or as part of a coven. If you dedicate within a coven, that action does not necessarily make you a member of the coven. In many covens, you do not become a member until you have passed your First Degree Initiation. Whether you dedicate on your own or in a coven, dedication is a serious step. You'll want to meditate on this commitment and spend some real time thinking about it before you set off on the Wiccan path.

First, Take Your Magickal Name

A name can say a lot about a person. In the past, names such as Miller, Cooper, or Smith indicated the individual's profession. These days, a name doesn't tell you that, but it can still divulge a lot. From just a name you can probably discern a person's gender, ethnic background, and sometimes even their religion.

Webweaving

A magickal name can be one word or two or more words or names combined. Examples of this kind of name include those of two popular authors—Starhawk and Silver RavenWolf. Compound names actually have an ancient tradition. The modern English name "Roger" comes from the Anglo-Saxon *Hrothgar,* which literally are the words *fame* and *spear* combined.

When you become dedicated to the Craft, you get to choose your magickal name, the name other witches and members of the Pagan community will call you. Your magickal name is also the name by which the Goddess will know you.

The Significance of a Magickal Name

Your name should have real significance to you. You want it to reflect your goals, dreams, ideals, and aspirations. Your magickal name should give others an idea of who you are and what you stand for. It can also serve to remind you of these things and provide inspiration to you on your path.

Why Take a Magickal Name, and When?

Some people feel limited by their names. Janes can feel plain or ordinary. And Michaels can feel like a dime-a-dozen because there are so many of them. When you become a witch you open up a new universe of possibilities. You don't want preconceived notions of who you are to hold you back from your limitless potential.

Having a magickal name can protect your privacy. For some people, keeping their status as a witch secret is important. Others like that their magickal names are known only to members of the Pagan community because it makes the community feel more special and magickal. Usually you take your magickal name upon dedication. This is a signal that you are committing to the Wiccan path.

Choosing Your Magickal Name

You can choose a name because it gives you a special feeling. You might pick the name of a God or Goddess to whom you are particularly drawn. Or you might like

the name of a famous Druid, such as Merlin. Your name could come to you in a dream, or it can be one that you have always dreamed of using!

Banish!

Resist the temptation to grab the first "witchy" name that pops into your head. Yes, Samantha, Sabrina, and Tituba sound cool. And one of these names may be right for you. But don't settle for the first name you think of. Maybe there is another, more significant name just waiting for you to find it.

One witch we know took the name Summoner because she summons things. Denise lived in the Middle East for a number of years, and because she was very moved by the lives of the women she met there, she chose the name Shaharazade. You may remember Shaharazade (or Sheherazade) from the *Tales of the Arabian Nights*. To save her own life, Shaharazade told her new husband, who was in the habit of killing his brides, a story every night. Her husband was so mesmerized by her tales that he kept putting off the hour of her death. By the time she told him a thousand and one stories, he had fallen in love with her and no longer wanted to kill her. Denise particularly likes this heroine because her story emphasizes a woman's creativity and her ability to take care of herself.

Alternatively, you can choose a name from something in Nature for which you have an affinity—Tree, Forest, and Willow are examples of such names.

What Your Magickal Name Says About You

Some magickal names conjure up strong images—Raven, Bear Heart, Hawk. Others are more gentle—Moon Feather, Ash, Snow Blossom. Consider what your name is going to say about you. You want your name to go with you—your body, mind, and spirit. This is not to say that if you are a small woman you can't take a strong-sounding name. And if you are a big muscle-bound guy you don't have to stick with rough, tough names like Thor.

Coming to Your Magickal Name: A Self-Exploration

You don't have any ideas for a magickal name? Get out your notebook and spend some time writing about each of the questions below. You may want to meditate on your answers. Or think about them before you go to bed, and you might find an answer in your dreams. You can work on one question at a time. Or scribble out

answers for all of them, come back, and add more thoughts as they occur to you. Remember, there are no wrong answers!

1. Do you have an affinity for a particular God or Goddess?
2. Do you have a favorite myth or legend? What is it? Who are the characters? With which one do you identify most strongly?
3. Is there a species of animal that is special to you? What qualities does that animal have?
4. Are you particularly drawn to one of the four Elements—Air, Fire, Water, or Earth? What about other natural substances such as different types of wood or metals?
5. What is your favorite plant? Favorite flower? Favorite tree?

We hope that these questions have stirred up some ideas. Your magickal name probably won't jump out and grab you, but if you're patient, we believe it will come to you.

So Mote It Be

To help you determine your magickal name, write each name you are considering on a slip of paper. Keep your pen and notebook handy, and put the slips into a paper bag. Give the bag a good shake. Imagine that the name that you draw will be yours forever. Draw out one slip. Then, without thinking too much about it, write down whatever feelings come up for you, even if they sound silly. Put the name back into the hat and draw again. If you keep getting the same name, consider that to be significant. Does seeing the name over and over annoy you? Or do you find comfort in the repetition?

The Name of Rebirth

In a lot of ways, when you dedicate and take your magickal name, you are reborn. A new you emerges and your magickal personality is born. In many faiths, now and throughout history, people take a new name to show that they have undergone this transformation. Their new name also indicates that they have made a commitment to their beliefs and to the laws that embody those beliefs.

Numerology: Your Destiny and Life Path Numbers

Many people use *numerology* to help select their magickal names. Numerology? Isn't that about numbers? Well, it is, but numerology is not just math. Numerology relates letters of the alphabet to numbers, and as such it's concerned with names, addresses, and other significant personal information. Each number (and its corresponding letter) has its own energy and meaning.

Pythagoras, the sixth-century B.C.E. mathematician who came up with that formula about the hypotenuse of a right triangle, is considered to be one of the fathers of numerology. Like many people do today, he believed that the numbers one through nine were symbolic representations of the stages of human life.

def•i•ni•tion

Numerology is the metaphysical science of numbers. Numerologists study the significance of names and numbers and relate them to each other to learn about the human condition. Numerology can help you discover who you are, where you're going, and who you will become.

Numbers and Their Meanings

Number	Meaning	Archetype
1	Independence	Leader, warrior
2	Harmony	Peacemaker
3	Self-expression	Artist, joy bringer
4	Building	Builder, worker, manager
5	Change	Risk taker, innovator
6	Nurturance	Caregiver, teacher
7	Inner focus	Researcher, seeker
8	Power	Chief, the boss
9	Service	Mystic, healer
Master Numbers		
11	Illumination	Spiritual Messenger
22	Enterprise	Master Builder
33	Healing love	Master of Healing

The first step in using numerology to help select your magickal name is to determine your Destiny Number. Your Destiny Number is derived from your birth name, the name that is on your birth certificate. Yup, that means you have to include that hideous middle name that no one knows about except members of your immediate family. Among other things, your Destiny Number reveals your life purpose, your spiritual mission, and the target that you are aiming for in life.

To calculate your Destiny Number, write down your full birth name and assign each letter a number based on the following chart. Add up the numbers for each name. Reduce the numbers for each name. Then add all the reduced numbers together, and reduce the final number to a single-digit number. Whew!

Numbers and Letters

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	

We'll calculate Denise Zimmermann's Destiny Number so you can get the hang of it.

D E N I S E Z I M M E R M A N N

4 5 5 9 1 5 8 9 4 4 5 9 4 1 5 5

First, add all the digits of the first name:

4 + 5 + 5 + 9 + 1 + 5 = 29

Reduce 29:

2 + 9 = 11, 1 + 1 = 2

Now, 11 is a special number, but we will get to that in a minute.

Then add the numbers of the second name:

8 + 9 + 4 + 4 + 5 + 9 + 4 + 1 + 5 + 5 = 54

Reduce 54:

5 + 4 = 9

Now add the two reduced numbers:

2 + 9 = 11

As we said, 11 is special. It's a Master Number and as such is not reduced at the end of a calculation, but is written 11/2. (The 2 is there because if you did reduce 11, you would get 2.)

Both the 11, which represents the Spiritual Messenger, and the 2, which represents harmony and peacemakers, are represented in Denise's Destiny Number. Now, let's look at Denise's magickal name: Shaharazade. Once again, we get 11/2 as the result. When choosing among a few possible magickal names, you might want to pick a name that shares your Destiny Number and its special energy. Whatever magickal name you choose, embrace its numerological energy, whatever it may be, as a guide to what you will learn and express on your magickal path.

S	H	A	H	A	R	A	Z	A	D	E
1	8	1	8	1	9	1	8	1	4	5

Add it all together:

1 + 8 + 1 + 8 + 1 + 9 + 1 + 8 + 1 + 4 + 5 = 47

Reduce the total:

4 + 7 = 11, so 11/2.

If the magickal name you have selected produces a number other than your Destiny Number, you can change the spelling of the name or alter the name by adding or taking away a letter.

There are many books on numerology that can explain the significance of your Destiny Number, and other numbers that are important in your numerological chart. We recommend *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Numerology, Second Edition*, by Kay Lagerquist and Lisa Lenard (see Appendix A).

Your Name in a Magickal Alphabet

Some witches use *Theban Script* to write their name on talismans and amulets. It is sometimes called Honorian Script or the Honorian Alphabet. It can also be referred to as the Witches' Alphabet, but many people consider

def•i•ni•tion

Theban Script is a special form of writing. Some believe Theban Script arose during the Middle Ages; others believe it is a recent development. Gardnerian witches frequently use it.

that term to be a misnomer. Using this special system of writing can help you to focus your energy and send it into the object that you are inscribing. You can even try Theban Script for spells and rituals.

Can You Change Your Magickal Name?

In some traditions, a witch first takes his or her magickal name upon dedication. Then, a year and a day later, at the time of First Degree Initiation, he or she takes another name. A witch may also rededicate under another name if the magickal name chosen no longer fits. When you first enter the Craft, you'll learn and grow a lot. Because of all that change, it is not unusual to need a new name. As a solitaire, you can change your name when you want. But it is probably not a good idea to do it frequently. You don't want to give yourself an identity crisis!

Practice writing your magickal name (or your mundane name, if you don't have a magickal one) in Theban Script, or use Theban Script when you make entries in your diary. If you use the script a little every day, pretty soon you'll know it by heart.

A New Path in an Old Way of Life

In many ways your life will change when you dedicate yourself to the Craft. And in many other ways it won't. You will still have the same family and friends. You will probably live in the same place and hold the same job, or you will continue to go to school. For many people, their external lives do not look much different, but inside they feel the change.

What It Means to Dedicate

Dedication means just that—dedication. When you dedicate yourself to the Craft, it means that you have looked at the Craft, studied, and made a decision to walk the Wiccan path. When you make your dedication, you let the Lord and Lady know that you welcome them into your life, that you have chosen the Craft, that you will follow the path of the witch, and will observe the Wiccan law—"An it harm none, do what ye will." You also are making a promise to respect the Lord and Lady.

When you dedicate you don't just take your magickal name, you take an oath that you will live by the Wiccan Rede. In a coven, you usually also promise not to reveal to nonmembers any of the information you learn about from the coven.

Taking Your New Name in Dedication

At your dedication ceremony, you'll take your magickal name. In a coven ritual, the High Priest or the High Priestess will ask you by what name you will be known in the circle. From then on, that will be the name the coveners call you.

As a solitaire, you can self-dedicate. During your self-dedication ritual, you can tell the God and Goddess what name you are taking.

So Mote It Be

As a way of celebrating your dedication, why not do something nice for Earth and her creatures? Feed the local wildlife, visit animals at a shelter, or dig in some compost around the base of a tree. Alternatively, you could send money to an organization that fights pollution or protects endangered animals. Or join a clean-up crew at a local park or stream. Or form your own cleaning brigade. When you're done, take yourself out for coffee and a slice of cake.

How to Do Your Own Self-Dedication

You can write your own self-dedication ceremony or use the one that follows. Look at a few other books for ideas, and don't forget the Internet. Whatever you do, make your dedication ritual a special time for you.

Dedication Ritual

1. First decide if this is truly what you want to do. Look deep within yourself and meditate on the question. Ask yourself, "Is this the path I want to walk?" If you decide that Wicca is truly your calling, you can proceed with your ritual.
2. Set up your altar. To do this, place the following objects on the surface you have chosen to work on:
   - A pentagram for protection
   - One silver candle for the Goddess
   - One gold candle for the God
   - One illuminator candle (you will light all the other candles from this one)
   - One bowl of holy water
   - One bowl of salt
   - One Fire candle
   - Your athame
   - A censer
   - A candle snuffer
   - A chalice
   - A bottle of wine or juice and some cakes
   - A libation bowl
   - The words of the dedication that follows (unless you want to improvise what you want to say to the God and Goddess)

   You will also need a lighter or book of matches to light your illuminator candle and incense.
3. Lay out your ritual robe (if you plan to wear one) and your magickal jewelry.
4. Draw your bath. To the water add ...
   - 1 tablespoon sea salt.
   - A couple drops jasmine essential oil.

   Light your bath candles. Play meditative music. Get in the tub and relax.

Breathe in the essence of the jasmine. Think about the ritual you will be performing and what it means to you. Meditate on the changes you will be making within yourself and your life. Think about your relationship with the Lord and Lady. Cleanse your mind as well as your body.

5. After bathing, drying, and dressing for the journey you are about to take, go to the altar and prepare your sacred space.
6. First consecrate the tools on your altar (see Chapter 9).
7. Now take your water and walk the circle deosil (clockwise) and say:

   As I walk this circle round
   I cleanse and consecrate this ground.

8. Next sprinkle your salt around the circle and say:

   First with Water then with Earth
   With negativity banished there's joyous rebirth.

9. Take the incense censer and walk the circle saying:

   Next with Fire, then with Air
   Leaving us only with purity fair.

10. Take your athame and mark the boundaries of the circle, pulling up the circle as you go. (For details of how to do this, see Chapter 11.)
11. Stand in front of your altar and light the illuminator candle with a match or lighter. Welcome the God and Goddess and thank them for coming.
12. Begin your dedication to the Goddess by saying the following:

    Goddess, I stand before you in this sacred place of power.
    I open my heart to your spirit.

    I open my mind to your wisdom.
    I dedicate myself to the learning of your mysteries.
    I dedicate my life to following the Wiccan path.

    O Great Mother, take me into your fold.
    Protect me, teach me, heal me, and empower me.
    Breathe your spirit in my body and make me complete.
    Teach me to see through eyes that are wise.
    Teach me to feel through a heart that is compassionate.
    Teach me to drink through lips that speak of kindness.
    Teach me to hear through ears without prejudice.
    Teach me to live in oneness with the earth.

Great Goddess, Queen of the Craft of the Wise, I come to you as your [son or daughter] [magickal name].

From this day forward I will follow your light and strive to learn the mysteries.

13. Light the silver candle with the flame of the illuminator candle.
14. Begin your dedication to the God by saying the following:

God, I stand before you in the sacred place of power.
I open my heart to your spirit.
I open my mind to your wisdom.
I dedicate myself to the learning of your mysteries.
I dedicate my life to following the Wiccan path.

O Great Father, take me into your fold.
Protect me, teach me, heal me, and empower me.
Breathe your spirit in my body and make me complete.
Teach me to see through eyes that are wise.
Teach me to feel through a heart that is compassionate.
Teach me to drink through lips that speak of kindness.
Teach me to hear through ears without prejudice.
Teach me to live in oneness with the earth.

All-powerful Lord, consort and protector of the Lady, I come to you as your [son or daughter] [magickal name].

From this moment forward I will follow your light and strive to learn the mysteries.

15. Light the gold candle from the illuminator candle.
16. Pour the wine in the chalice and get your cakes.
17. Before you eat and drink, pour some of the wine and break off some of your cake into the libation bowl for the Lord and Lady.
18. Now drink wine, eat the cakes, and reflect on this ritual and how you have taken the first big step in changing your life.
19. When you are finished eating and drinking, thank the Lord and Lady for attending your dedication and snuff out the gold and silver candles.
20. Take your athame and walk widdershins (counterclockwise) around the circle to take it down (see Chapter 11 for directions on how to do this).

21. Snuff out your illuminator candle and clean up. Make sure you take the contents of the libation bowl, the Lord and Lady's portion of the feast, and give it back to the earth. Go outdoors and pour it on the ground.

Congratulations! You have dedicated yourself to the Wiccan way of life.

You may have enjoyed reading this dedication ritual, but keep in mind that ritual is primarily designed to be experienced, not read about. In other words, try it out!

The Least You Need to Know

- Your magickal name is a reflection of who you are, what you stand for, and what you hope to become.
- Your magickal name is special. Only people in the Craft and the Pagan community need to know your magickal name.
- You can use numerology to help you pick your magickal name.
- Your dedication is a moving experience in which you take your magickal name and invite the Lord and Lady into your life.

Chapter 9

Preparing to Do Ritual

In This Chapter

- Into the tub—the ritual bath
- Preparing your tools
- Getting your feet on solid ground
- Don't stuff yourself, and why
- The magick of music or the music of magick?

Ritual is an important part of the Wiccan faith. In ritual you honor the God and Goddess. You can also practice magick within ritual. Because ritual is such a central aspect of the faith, you want to make sure that you are properly prepared for it.

In this chapter, we'll tell you how to prepare your body and your mind for ritual. You'll also learn how to prepare your altar and tools. We'll even suggest some recorded music that you can use during ritual or before to get you in the proper mood.

A Cleansing Ritual Bath

Taking a ritual bath is an important preritual step. The bath helps prepare the subconscious mind for ritual. If the point is to be clean, why not just

take a shower? While a shower is good for cleaning your body, it does little for your mind. A shower will leave you fresh, but it does not relax you the way a bath will. When in the bath, your heart rate slows and the body and mind find peace.

Why a Bath Is Important and When to Take It

The ritual bath is important much the way your magickal clothes and tools are important. They signal your subconscious mind to get to work. The bath helps you let go of negativity and distracting thoughts and focus your mind. It gives you the opportunity to reflect on your self and your intentions. Time in the bath is also enjoyable and refreshing! When you climb out of the tub, it's almost as if you are being reborn.

You should take a ritual bath before you do any formal ritual, especially magick, to make sure you don't have negative energy stuck on you. In preparing for ritual, after you have assembled all your tools, gone over your checklist, prepared the room, unplugged the phone, removed your watch, and checked to make sure your ritual outfit is clean, you can get into the tub. Use your ritual bath to reflect, meditate, get grounded, and connect with deity.

How to Take a Ritual Bath

To prepare your ritual bath, put essential or magickal oils and/or herbs in the water. Use only a couple drops of oil, because you want only a subtle essence of scent. (You don't want to run everyone else out of the circle!) In addition, be careful with pure essential oils—they can burn your skin if not diluted properly. If you are using herbs, you can place each herb in the foot of an old stocking. Tie the stocking up and use it like a tea bag to infuse your bath. This way you won't have to clean bits of chamomile leaf from your tub and drain or pick them out of your hair. Choose your herbs and oils based on your personal preference or on the kind of ritual or magick you plan to do. Here are some examples of ritual bath formulas you may want to try.

So Mote It Be

If you are lucky enough to live near a natural body of water, you can take your ritual bath in it. We said natural, because swimming pools, with all their smelly chlorine, don't count. You can bathe for ritual in a pond, lake, stream, river, hot spring, or ocean. As you exit the waters, imagine Venus, the goddess of love and beauty, rising for the first time from the foam of the sea.

To help you see the best path and have clearer visions, add the following to your bath:

- 2 TB. sage
- 2 TB. mugwort
- 1 clear quartz crystal
- 1 obsidian stone
- 3 or 4 drops blue food coloring

This bath recipe, if used right before bedtime, can also aid you in remembering your dreams.

To lift your sprits and enhance healthy self-love, use:

- 1 rose quartz
- A handful of rose petals
- 2 drops rose essential oil
- 2 TB. vervain
- A few marigold blossoms

Consult Chapter 18 for more on stones, herbs, and oils. Once you have read up on these materials, you'll be able to create your own ritual bath recipes.

Enjoy a luxurious ritual bath.

Let the water soothe you, and allow yourself to feel nurtured. If you like, play soft music while you're in the tub to complete the special atmosphere. You could listen to chants while you take your ritual bath, or learn a few chants and sing them to yourself. Here's one to try:

Now my body is reclaimed,
Now my body is reborn.
Now my spirit is reclaimed,
Now my spirit is reborn.
Now my magick is reclaimed,
Now my magick is reborn.

Why not sing this chant softly to yourself next time you take a ritual bath? We're sure it will help to put you in the right frame of mind. When you feel ready, get up slowly. As you are stepping out of the water, let go of any negativity. Imagine that it has stayed in the water and that you are letting it flow down the drain away from you. This way when you emerge from the tub, you will be cleansed physically *and* mentally. Put on your clean robe or outfit (or stay as you are in your birthday suit!), and you are ready for ritual.

Consecration: A Means of Empowerment

After you buy or finish making your magickal tools, you need to *consecrate* them. Consecrating your tools before you use them rids the tools of any negative energy they may be harboring. It is also a way of dedicating your tools to the Lord and Lady, to the good of all, and empowering them with positive energy.

def•i•ni•tion

To **consecrate** something means to bless it or make it sacred. The word carries the connotation of physical change, as well. In the Catholic Church, *consecrate* is the word used to describe the transformation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. And that's a big change. When you consecrate your tools, you also dedicate or devote them to the Goddess and the greatest good for all.

The five Elements are Air, Fire, Water, Earth, and Spirit. In Wicca, each Element is associated with a direction in the ritual circle. Earth's direction is North, and Air is East. Water is West, while Fire is South. Spirit encompasses all directions because it surrounds and is part of everything.

To consecrate your athame, first light your incense. Say:

> *With the Element of Air, I blow away any negative energies from this athame so that only positive energies remain. This is my will, so mote it be.*

While you say these words, pass your athame through the smoke from your lit incense three times. Then say:

> *With the Element of Fire, I burn away any negative energies from this athame so that only positive energies remain. This is my will, so mote it be.*

And pass the athame through the flame of the lit candle three times. Then say:

> *With the Element of Water, I wash away any negative energies from this athame so that only positive energies remain. This is my will, so mote it be.*

As you do this, place the tip of the athame in the water on your altar. Then say:

> *With the Element of Earth, I bury any negative energies from this athame so that only positive energies remain. This is my will, so mote it be.*

While you say these words, sprinkle salt from your altar over the athame. Finally, say:

> *O Lord and Lady, may you charge and protect this athame from any negativity. May your blessing be upon it as I dedicate the work of this athame for positive purposes only so as it bring harm to none. This is my will, so mote it be.*

As you speak, hold your athame up to the Lord and Lady. Go through this same process with all of your altar instruments and with anything that you plan to place on your altar, use in ritual, or make holy. As you probably can imagine, the first time you set up your altar, it can take some time! After the first time, you don't need to reconsecrate all of your tools unless someone else has touched them or you feel they need to be recharged with positive energies.

After you've consecrated an object, no one should touch it but you. If someone does touch one of your consecrated things, you will have to reconsecrate it to get rid of that person's energy. Make sure you consecrate everything that you're going to use in ritual, including your magickal jewelry. You can consecrate your clothing in the same way, if you like, but you don't need to. It is enough just to know that your clothes are clean. Or you can put them out under the full Moon. (You don't need to consecrate your clothes because you don't use your robes or other clothing to do magick. They just serve to get you into the right frame of mind.)

What Does It Mean to Charge Your Magickal Tools?

Charging magickal tools is a way of waking them up and enlivening their positive energy. One of the easiest ways to charge your tools is by laying them out under the full Moon at night. If you can, spread them out in the light of the full Moon for a couple hours, or even overnight. After some time in the moonlight, the energy of the Goddess will penetrate your tools and they will be ready to use. If you want to add the God energy, you can spread them out under the Sun.

If you live in an apartment, you can place items for charging on your balcony or windowsill. Or place them in a patch of moonlight that filters in through your windows. Alternatively, you can hold your tools up toward the full Moon on a night when she is shining and ask the Goddess to bless them.

You can also charge your tools with the energy of a specific Elemental power. It's nice to start this process on a night when the moon is shining. For each Element, you will use a slightly different technique.

- **Air:** To charge one of your tools, or any other object, with Air, place it in the branches of a tree, where Air will be able to surround it. You may need to tie the object to the tree so it remains secure. Allow it to absorb Air's energy from moonlight to moonlight, then take your charged object down and put it to good use.
- **Fire:** Place the object you want to charge with Fire inside a box. Put a candle on top of the box. Light the candle and let it burn for one hour. Then snuff out the flame. The next day, at around the same time, light the candle again and let it burn for one hour. The two periods of candle burning symbolically represent a full day, from moonlight to moonlight. So, if you first lit your candle at 7 P.M. and let it burn for an hour, you may want to relight your candle the next night at 8 P.M.
- **Water:** If the item you want to charge can get wet, place it in a bowl of water. If the object in question cannot get wet, put it in a plastic resealable bag, seal it, and place it in water. Allow your object to absorb Water's energy and become charged from moonlight to moonlight. If submerging your object seems too cumbersome, stand in moonlight and sprinkle the object with water while saying a few words to call up Water's power.
- **Earth:** You will also need a plastic resealable bag to charge an object with Earth. Place the object in the bag and seal it. Then bury the neatly sealed object in your backyard. Let it rest and become charged from moonlight to moonlight. If you do not have a yard, fill a bag with sand or soil. "Bury" the object that you want to charge with Earth inside the filled bag and let it drink in Earth's energy.

A Charging Ritual for Your Magickal Tools

The first step in a charging ritual for your tools is to cleanse and consecrate them, as outlined earlier. Then take your tools out under the full Moon. If you own quartz crystals, bring them with you and place them on or beside the tools to be charged. The crystals will help to pull positive energy to your tools.

Sit on the ground near your tools. Take a few deep breaths, or spend a few minutes in meditation. Envision the moonlight filling each tool with power. Ask the Goddess to bless your tools and fill them with light. If you can leave the tools outside overnight,

do so. If not, wrap them up, carry them inside, and store them in a safe place where no one else will handle them. You can do the same thing with the God, except you would place your tools under the Sun at noon when it is high and bright in the sky. (We don't recommend this for candles because they will melt.)

Learning to Ground Yourself Before Ritual

If you don't ground yourself before doing ritual, your energies will not flow the way they should. Your energy will be erratic and your magick may not do what you want it to. When you ground yourself, you align the *chakras*, or energy centers of the body. In addition, grounding allows you to receive the natural flow of energy from the earth and enables you to become one with the earth. It also helps to prepare your subconscious to do the work it needs to do.

Grounding Techniques You Can Use

There are many different techniques that you can use to ground yourself. Here's a fun one to do outside. While standing, slowly stomp your feet on the ground. Feel the vibration caused by your foot landing. Feel the sensation of your foot in contact with the solid force of the earth. Keep stomping and let yourself feel the vibrations throughout your entire body. Imagine your feet merging with the earth until you become an extension of the earth.

Or you can envision that you are becoming a tree:

> Sit up straight in a chair with your feet flat on the floor. Place your hands on your knees and relax your shoulders. Breathe slow, deep breaths. Relax your abdominal muscles, and let your tummy move in and out as you breathe. Close your eyes and start to picture yourself as a tree. Take some time to really imagine yourself with branches and a trunk. See the picture in your mind grow clearer and sharper. Then, as you continue to breathe, picture roots growing from the bottom of your feet. With each exhale, push your roots deeper and deeper down. Watch them grow farther and farther into the earth.

def•i•ni•tion

Chakra means "wheel" in Sanskrit, the ancient language of India. The chakras are round, spinning discs of energy that lie along your spine from your tailbone to the top of your head. Hindus, Tibetans, Taoists, and Hopis all use chakra systems to explain the various energies in the body.

Once your roots have grown, let them bring you nutrients. As you breathe in, pull up cool, dark minerals and water from the ground. As you breathe in, see the nutrients fill your tree. As you breathe out, feel your roots grow even longer. The nutrients you are taking in are the blessing from the Goddess. But this is only half of what we need to thrive—we also need the blessing of the Lord, the Sun.

As you breathe out, pull down the golden rays of the Sun into your branches, down through your trunk, and into your roots. As you breathe in, pull in the cool nutrients of the earth. Breathe out and feel the golden light of the Sun entering from above. Breathe in and feel the earth's nutrients filling you from below. Feel the rhythm—pulling in the Sun from above as you exhale and drinking in the nutrients from the ground as you inhale. Picture the tree getting bigger and stronger and healthier. Feel the air and sway in the breeze.

After you have gone through this exercise and given it your full concentration, you will be grounded and ready to work.

So Mote It Be

Are visualization and meditation hard for you? Do you sometimes avoid doing things you find difficult? Do uncomfortable emotions come up for you when you sit still? Well, it's really true that practice makes perfect. The more you work at focusing your mind in meditation or visualization, the easier it will become. If you practice every day for just a little while, you will get better and better. And it's nice to take 5 or 10 minutes out of your day to relate to deity. As your sense of connection grows stronger and stronger, you will be less plagued by unpleasant feelings. You'll be able to sit for longer periods of time. And your visualizations will grow sharper and clearer.

Focus Is No Hocus-Pocus

Focus is a really important part of doing ritual and magick. If you can't focus, you won't be able to get into ritual, and you won't enjoy it. And neither will you be able to do magick. Focusing is what channels and directs the energy you use. If you can't concentrate your mind on that task, your energy gets nowhere.

Say you are getting ready to do ritual. You sit down and close your eyes to meditate, but your eyes keep popping open and your mind continues to whirl. If you can't ground yourself and get focused, then you are not ready to work. Avoid working when you aren't prepared! If you're doing magick, your magick could go in a direction other than the one you intended.

Focusing is not some esoteric art. Just like every other day-to-day activity, the more you practice focusing, the better you get. So practice, okay?

Fasting Before Ritual

Almost all religions use fasting to some extent. Fasting can be the total abstention from food and drink, or it can be more moderate. Many Wiccans fast before doing ritual. Some will eat breakfast, skip lunch and dinner, and drink only fruit juice and water during the day. Others eat lunch and then have nothing but juice later, and still others will have lunch and a light dinner. Whatever you do, don't eat a big meal before ritual.

Banish!

Do not fast if you have any medical condition that might be aggravated by such an action. Consult your primary-care physician before undertaking any kind of fast.

There are several reasons why people fast on ritual days. When you eat, especially a large meal, your blood pressure goes up. Your blood pressure also rises when you raise energy during ritual. So if you eat a huge meal before ritual, you put your heart on double duty. A large meal also might make you sleepy. Hasn't that happened to you before? You eat and, because all your energy is going into digestion, you have to lie down for a while. You don't want to feel like you need a nap when you're trying to build power!

If you decide to fast, make sure that you drink juice and plenty of other fluids. If you are diabetic or have another illness, you may not be able to fast. And that's okay. Fasting is not necessary. Healthy people should be able to refrain from eating for a short amount of time before ritual.

Magick Music

It's great to use music before ritual—when you take your ritual bath, for instance. You can also play music during ritual.

Chants: Find Your Magickal Voice

Listening to a tape or CD of chants is a great way to get you in the mood for ritual. There are all kinds of chants—from Gregorian to Sanskrit to Wiccan. Try listening to

So Mote It Be

You can hear Pagan music on the web. Check out WGDS Goddess Radio at www.wgds.net. Try the Wicca Radio Network at www.nvogel.com/wrn.html, or listen to the show "Full Circle" on the Witchcraft Pagan Broadcast Network at www.tekneek.com/wpbn. If you live in the Lincoln, Nebraska area, tune your radio to KZUM 89.3 FM for Murphy's Magic Mess on Sunday mornings. Or listen to live streaming radio of the show online at www.kzum.org.

a few different types and see what appeals to you. For example, the group Kiva, and we mean group as in band, has a great CD of Wiccan dance music and chants. The album is called *Re-newal*, and it features tracks you might want to use in your next ritual.

Know that you can chant even if you don't like the sound of your own voice. When chanting, you don't need to sound like a grand diva. The point is to focus on the chant and its intent. The Lord and Lady want to hear from you even if you can't carry a tune. So try chanting—even if your singing makes your family shriek and the dogs howl!

Within ritual, you can use chants to build your cone of power. Just the way you would with drumming, you start out slow; then you build the pace and raise the volume. We'll tell you more about just how to do this in Chapter 16.

You can also use chanting in ritual to reground yourself or to put yourself in a certain mind-set. Slow, rhythmic chanting can be very soothing and calming. It can also help to open your heart to deity just the way singing a hymn would.

Drumming

When you are building a cone of power you might want to beat a drum or tambourine. Drumming is an excellent way to build up energy. It's a scientific fact that when people listen to drums, their heart rates speed up as the tempo of the drumming increases. You'll want to start out soft and slow. Then increase the speed and volume. Keep drumming, getting faster and louder and faster and louder. Pretty soon you will notice that your heart is beating faster, too. You'll feel your energy rise up.

Drumming also can help to keep you focused. When you drum, the beat grabs the full attention of your body and your mind. And that's a great way to get ready for the work you are going to do.

The Least You Need to Know

- Taking a ritual bath is an important part of your preparation for ritual. It relaxes you, cleans you of negative energy, and gets you in the right mindset for ritual.
- When you consecrate your tools, you rid them of negative energy, a necessary preparatory step for ritual, and ask the Lord and Lady to bless them.
- You must ground yourself before ritual to stabilize your energy, which allows you to receive energy from the earth and helps you focus.
- Focus, focus, focus—without focus there is no ritual and no magick.
- Music is important in Wicca, just as it is in many other religions.

Chapter 10

Where to Do Ritual

In This Chapter

- In and out of sacred space
- Choosing your sacred space
- Your altar
- Objects on your altar

There is a time and a place for everything. But what kind of place do you need to do ritual and magick? Do you have to find a secluded tower in an ancient castle? Or an isolated mountain crag fringed with toadstools? Those sound like locations with some magickal potential, but actually, many witches do their magick and ritual at home in their living rooms or outdoors in their backyards.

In this chapter, you'll learn about sacred space—an area you can use for ritual. Our discussion of sacred space should help you decide on what kind of space you'll want to use for ritual. We'll also tell you about altars and how to set one up. We'll even tell you how to make a portable altar you can carry with you.

Sacred Rituals Need a Sacred Place

When you were a kid, didn't your mother tell you not to play ball in the house? Then she'd always tell you to go outside. Humans have designated areas for specific functions probably since we lived in caves. Maybe even before that. We sleep in bedrooms, bathe in bathrooms, dine in dining rooms. And we worship in special places set aside for that purpose—temples, churches, synagogues, and mosques, to name a few. You should hold ritual in a special place to keep ritual *sacred.*

def•i•ni•tion

Our word **sacred** comes from the Middle English word meaning "to consecrate." So an object or place that is sacred is one that has been consecrated. It is also something that has been devoted to worship or set apart for a single use.

Often places of worship have been built on spots of naturally occurring power. Some sites that are currently home to a religious building or shrine have been occupied by just such a structure since before recorded history. And you usually can feel it. Haven't you ever walked into a house of worship and been hit by the energy of the place?

What Makes a Sacred Place Sacred?

In many respects, because the God and Goddess live in all things, you could argue that the whole Earth is a sacred place. But most witches would agree that to really make an area sacred you need to cleanse the space of negative energies and consecrate it. A place that has been made sacred in such a way is a great space in which to spend time. You can relax there, meditate, or communicate with deity. Sacred space is safe space—somewhere you feel not just comfortable, but welcome.

How Is a Sacred Space Different from a Magick Circle?

Sacred space is space that has been cleansed and consecrated. A magick circle is also an area that has been cleansed and consecrated, but it is more than that. A magick circle is an area of protection. Before you pull up a magick circle in which to do your workings, you need to cleanse and consecrate the area. Then you make your circle inside the consecrated space. (For more about magick circles, see Chapter 11.)

Coming to Your Sacred Wicca Space: A Self-Exploration

If you intend to do ritual alone, you won't need a lot of room. The same is true if you want to meditate or communicate with deity. You'll want somewhere private and quiet. In all likelihood, this space will be indoors. But how do you pick the spot for

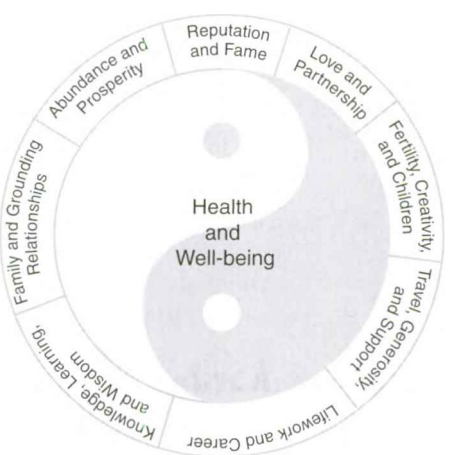
your private religious and magickal activities? Some witches consider the principles of Feng Shui, the ancient Chinese art of placement. Simply put, Feng Shui involves arranging your space to help you create the most healthful and harmonious flow of energy. Clutter, dirt and dust, broken objects, and dead plants are all seen as traps for energy. Clearing out and cleaning up are the first steps in opening the energy flow. (And, of course, you want to make the area you are going to use fit for your honored guests—the God and the Goddess.)

Feng Shui associates different areas of a house or a room with different aspects of your life. For example, as you enter a room, the prosperity area is ahead of you to the left. So, keeping Feng Shui in mind, when working magick to increase your prosperity, you may want to do your workings in your prosperity area. Alternatively, you could set your altar up within your circle in the circle's prosperity area.

Study the Feng Shui diagram, which is called a bagua, and see if there is an area of your life/space that is calling out for attention. While you are developing your relationship with the Lord and the Lady, why not focus on Family and Grounding Relationships and let the power of Feng Shui help you get closer to deity?

Webweaving

Since the time of the ancient Romans, and maybe even before that, sacred space in the form of an altar or a temple has been a safe area where slaves and those accused of crimes could find sanctuary. In Roman times, any act of violence against a person taking such sanctuary was considered to be an insult to the Gods.



Enter
Feng Shui's Bagua

Tuning into the ancient art of Feng Shui can help you connect to the energy of a sacred space.

Setting and Respecting Sacred Boundaries

You should cleanse the whole area that you will be working in. It can be as small as the space around you—usually a nine-foot circle is big enough to work in. Or if you are working with a group, the space you cleanse may have to be very large—say, a quarter of an acre.

Once you have made a magick circle in which to work, you should stay inside the circle. If you need to leave, you have to cut a door in the circle to do so. Many witches believe it is best to create a door in the circle in the North or East. To make a door, you cut the energy field of the circle with your athame.

If you are working alone, leave your broom to guard the door while you are out of the circle. (Many witches leave their brooms by the door of their house or apartment for the same purpose.) If you are working with a group, the person who cuts the door stands by as guardian. When you return and have reentered the circle, remember to seal the door. With your athame, close up the space that you have cut by moving in the opposite direction that you did when you cut the door. In other words, if you cut the door from left to right, you will seal the door by moving from right to left. When you cut a door, you draw energy from the circle and leave a void. The energy is drawn into your athame. When you seal the door, you take the energy out of the tool and make the circle complete again. Should you forget to seal the door, you will risk being visited by entities that you probably would rather not meet.

Banish!

Stories about witchcraft mishaps can be frightening, but avoid dwelling on your fears. Remember that every worthwhile activity carries some risk. Behave responsibly in your Craft activities, just the way you do when you drive a car, ride a bike, or cross the street, and you'll be just fine.

Once, a few years ago when working with a large group, Denise pulled up a circle, but then cut a door to get something from outside the circle. When she came back, she got distracted and forgot to seal the door after herself. Twenty-four hours later, she got sick, and she stayed sick for two and a half months! None of her doctors could figure out what was wrong with her. One day, as she was growing weaker and weaker, she remembered the day that she hadn't sealed the door. She knew that a negative entity would go after the person who had pulled up the circle. She called a friend, and they did a magick healing ritual. Within 12 hours Denise was back to normal and she never forgot to reseal the door again.

The moral of the story? Remember to seal the door, if you have cut one! If you keep in mind that the circle is there to protect you and that you need to honor and respect sacred space, you shouldn't have any problems.

Crafting an Altar

In many religious traditions all over the world, people keep *altars* in their homes. Some of these altars are devoted to a single deity, others to an individual's ancestors, and still others to a group of Gods and spirits. Altars are often designed along traditional lines, or they are just a corner in a room. As a Wiccan, you get to create your own altar.

What's So Special About an Altar?

Your altar is your special area for magickal workings and religious observance. It should be used only for these purposes. You can think of it as your Wiccan workbench. You can use your altar as a work area when combining herbs or dressing candles, for instance. Your altar also is a central space where you can keep many of your magickal tools—salt, holy water, and an athame, to name a few. (See the "What Goes on Your Altar?" section later in this chapter for more information.) If you are able to leave your altar set up when you aren't working, it will represent your honoring of deity even when you are not present. In that sense, the altar can function as a shrine and tribute to the God and Goddess. Your altar is also another important tool that helps you focus your personal power.

def•i•ni•tion

An **altar** is a working surface, such as a tabletop, that is to be used only for magickal or religious purposes. The English word comes from a Latin word that meant "material for burning sacrificial offerings."

What Do Altars Look Like?

If you have privacy concerns, your altar does not have to scream, "A witch lives here." Some people use the mantle over the fireplace as an altar, and to the naive visitor it just looks like they have an interesting and creative sense of interior design. If you need to, there are many ways to disguise your altar.

Altar Specs

Your altar can be a regular table. It can be round or square. It can be triangular or oblong or oval. Your altar can be of any shape, size, or height that you like. You can use what you have or make something especially for your purposes. You could use a crate with a cloth over it. Or you could go a more natural route and use a large flat

rock out in the woods, or the cut surface of a tree stump in your backyard. All you have to do is cleanse and consecrate the surface you have chosen, add an altar cloth, if you have one, and presto—there's your altar.

Altars Big and Small

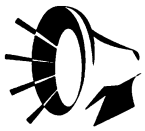
At many metaphysical stores, you can buy small altars that hang on the wall. They look like knickknack shelves with a little drawer at the bottom where you can store things. Most of them have a mirror or a picture at the top, so they look quite decorative. If you do decide to go with a small altar, try not to let it get too small. You should have enough room for your candles, ritual objects, and magickal workings. If you're lucky enough to have the space, spread out your tools on a large table. This way you'll have plenty of room to work and enough surface area to add your own personal touches to the collection of objects you keep on your altar.

Location, Location: North, South, East, West

Usually a permanent altar is placed in the Northern or Eastern section of a room, but if your space constraints don't allow for such a placement, you can put it where you have to. Within a magick circle, whether you are indoors or out, you also should try to set up your altar in the North or East. Keep it oriented so that when you stand to work at it, you are facing one of those directions. If that simply isn't possible or practical for the area in which you will be working, set up the altar in such a way that you are comfortable. During ritual, you also can keep the altar in the center of your magick circle. Some witches prefer to have the altar centrally located because the center of a circle is the spot of strongest energy. The circle gives all participants a unique view, or perspective, on the ritual.

Sanctuary: Indoor vs. Outdoor Altars

Many witches prefer to work outdoors. What better way to honor the God and Goddess than to be among Nature? Despite this preference, many are not able to work outside because it is difficult to find a safe and private space outdoors. Even if you have a backyard, you may not have sufficient privacy to practice ritual there. As a result, most witches do ritual inside. Besides ensuring privacy, there are other advantages to working indoors. If you work indoors, you can have a permanent altar that you leave up to honor the God and Goddess after your ritual is over. In addition, when you do an indoor ritual you will have all the comforts of your home, including the bathroom.



Banish!

Don't practice an impromptu ritual in a park or other public place. Children playing or joggers running by will distract you. What's more, you may attract unwanted attention to yourself, and maybe even the police (especially if you've been brandishing your athame). If you want to use a park or other public place for ritual, plan ahead. Get a permit, if you need one, and talk to the local police precinct before you begin and before a frightened bystander calls them.

Permanent vs. Moveable Altars

Some witches set up their altars in a spare room, in a corner, or even in a closet and never move it. It's nice to have a space, even if it is tiny, where your altar can live. For others, because of space constraints or a lack of privacy, the altar has to be moved or taken apart and put away after ritual is done. In an ideal situation, you would have a permanent altar. That way, even when you are not home, your altar is there honoring the God and Goddess. It's also nice to come home after a long day and see your religious and magickal items all laid out and ready to use. And, of course, having a permanent altar can save you cleanup and putting-away time. If, however, a permanent altar is not an option for you in your present living situation, don't worry. A temporary or moveable altar is just as good in the eyes of deity. And witches have probably used them for hundreds and hundreds of years.

What Goes on Your Altar?

Here's a list of basic tools for your altar:

- One or two illuminator candles
- One red candle for Fire
- A silver candle to represent the Goddess
- A gold candle to represent the God
- A pentagram
- A censer
- Water and salt in bowls
- An athame
- A chalice
- A bell
- A wand

So Mote It Be

Avoid overcrowding your altar. Remember, your altar is both a place of worship and a working surface. You should have space to do your workings. You don't want your altar to look messy. That would be disrespectful to the God and Goddess, and to yourself, too. Put away things when you're done with them.

When you place your tools on your altar, you'll want to pay attention to the four directions and the Elements. Because the censer and incense are associated with Air and the East, place your censer in the Eastern quadrant of your altar. The athame is associated with Fire and the South, so place it in the South along with the Fire candle. The chalice is associated with Water and the West, so it goes in the West along with the bowl of water. Your bowl of salt represents Earth, which is associated with the North, so it goes in the North. Your illuminator candles are placed at the top next to a statue of the Lord and Lady if you have them on the altar. A pentagram is placed in the middle of the altar, with the bell on the left. If you have a cauldron, it can go in the North.

You should also keep a lighter nearby to light your illuminator candles. Some people keep one under their altar or in a nearby drawer, so they always have one when they need it. It's a good idea to keep a large bottle of water under your altar, too. You might get thirsty during ritual or you might have to douse some flames! You might also want to consider investing in a small fire extinguisher to keep near your altar. Candles can fall over or suddenly flare up. And wouldn't it be better to be prepared for such an occurrence? As Denise says, "There's nothing in the world worse than a flaming witch."

def•i•ni•tion

In Native American tradition, a **totem animal** is an animal that represents a clan or a family. The word *totem* comes from an Ojibwa word that means "my family mark." Some witches and some covens have totem animals, or power animals, that help them in their magickal work. Such an animal does not have to be a pet. Neither does it have to be a real live physical entity. Rather, the spirit or the power of the animal is called upon.

You can keep your wand on your altar if you want. Your wand also should be placed in the South. There are all kinds of other things you can put on your altar—a representation of your *totem animal*, crystals, herbs you plan to use, images or statuettes of the God and Goddess you are working with. If you don't have a censer, you can use a small cauldron, which is also great for burning other objects and for Fire magick. If you can't afford to buy that beautiful pewter pentagram that you saw in your metaphysical store last week, don't worry. Draw a pentagram on a piece of paper, and while you are saving your pennies, use it on your altar instead of the fancy one. Your paper pentagram will serve the purpose just as well.

Here's another tip: the country of Morocco uses the pentagram as its symbol. A pentagram appears on the Moroccan flag and on some Moroccan currency. If you can get a Moroccan coin, you've got a pentagram for your altar or to carry with you!

If you choose to work with the Goddess alone, you can honor her in her three phases—Maiden, Mother, and Crone—with three separate candles—white, red, and black. If you can't find a silver candle to represent the Goddess, you can use three candles to represent the three phases on your altar instead. If you choose to work with just the God, you can honor him in his three phases (Prince, King, and Elder). His candles are black, gold, and white.

Porta-Pagan: Carrying Your Altar with You

Some witches carry a small altar with them all the time, either in a little bag on their persons or in a box in their cars. This way they are able to do ritual anywhere, which is great if they run into friends. When driving, a witch with a porta-Pagan might stop if she saw a dead animal by the side of the road and do ritual to help the animal pass over.

If you'd like a little porta-Pagan, check out your local metaphysical store. You'll probably be able to find everything you need in miniature there, around your house, or in Nature. Most stores will stock tiny pewter athame charms. (If you can't find one, remember that you can always use your two fingers held together instead.) Add two birthday candles, a small pentagram like one you would wear around your neck, little scallop shells from the beach to hold your water and salt, a small bag of salt, and a cowry shell to represent the Goddess. (Cowry shells are shiny, tropical shells once used as money in areas of Africa and the South Pacific. These shells are still considered valuable. The cowry shell is thought to be a yoni—a symbol of the power of a woman's vulva.)

Put all of these items into a little velvet bag. All you need to do is add water, and you'll be ready for ritual.

The Least You Need to Know

- An area that has been cleansed and consecrated is sacred space. You make your magick circle inside sacred space.
- If you have to leave a magick circle, you must cut a door in the energy so you can get out. While you are out, make sure that someone stands guard at the door, or leave your broom by the door to watch it for you.

- *Always* seal the door after you have returned to circle. If you don't, you could be exposing yourself to negative entities that will mess with your magick or with you.
- You can make sacred space almost anywhere. If you plan to do ritual, you must feel safe in the space you choose, and there must be enough privacy so that others do not distract you.
- You can use any flat surface for your altar. Ideally, you should have enough room to accommodate your candles, ritual objects, and magickal tools.

Chapter 11

Cast a Magick Circle

In This Chapter

- The geometry of it all
- Casting the circle
- Sharing in the circle
- Taking down the circle

You're probably starting to get a feel for Wiccan ritual and for magick. Maybe you've performed a dedication ceremony for yourself and taken a magickal name. If you've done that, you even have a little ritual experience under your belt. Now, we're going to get more specific about ritual and one of ritual's major components, the magick circle.

Whenever you are going to do magick, you should create a magick circle. One of the reasons you do this is to contain any undirected energy that you stir up within the circle. The magick circle also protects you from any outside magickal beings. Inside your circle you are safe; only things that you invite in can enter. Within your circle you should feel comfortable and relaxed so you can meditate, visualize, and build up your energy into a cone of power.

What Is a Magick Circle?

A magick circle is a protective area of energy that you create to work in. Some people like to think of it as a magick bubble. They believe the idea of a bubble better represents the three-dimensional nature of this protected area. A magick circle or bubble is not just a line on the floor. It goes through the floor and surrounds you on all sides. When you pull up a magick circle, you want to think of yourself as being inside a sphere of protective energy. In addition to protecting you, a magick circle serves to hold and concentrate your energies.

Webweaving

Ceremonial magickians—individuals who practice magick in a ceremony that is devoid of religious content—also create a circle inside which to work. Because they often summon creatures from other realms to help them with their magick, they need the circle to protect themselves. The creatures they call are not always friendly.

When to Cast a Circle, and When Not To

Whenever you want to do magick, you need to cast a circle. The circle will protect you from any outside influences or little creatures from a different plane that want to meddle with you or your magick.

If you are sick or exhausted, you should not cast a magick circle. You should plan to do magick only when you are feeling well. You also should not cast a circle when you are unprepared. Remember that you need to plan your magick and be focused on your intent. Finally, never cast a circle when you are angry. The circle is supposed to be full of your positive energy, not your annoyance or wrath.

Round vs. Square

Because a circle has round edges, not corners and straight edges, it's hard to break into one. (Circles denote continuous strength; corners are weak joints.) A circle also has no beginning and no end; it goes around and around and is both the beginning and the end. If, when you are casting a circle, you walk the perimeter of a square room, the circle will pass through the walls so that it holds the entire room inside. Or you can cast a smaller circle inside the room. Either you end up with your room sealed inside a protective bubble, or you have a protective bubble inside your room.

Getting Started

You've planned your ritual. You've made sure you have all your tools. You've taken your ritual bath. You're dressed in your robes and magickal jewelry. Now what?

How to Cleanse the Sacred Space

Your first step is to cleanse your sacred space, the area in which you plan to do ritual, by sweeping out all the negativity. With your magick broom, sweep out the negative energy, and don't forget to sweep the corners!

While you sweep, say this little rhyme:

Sweep, sweep with this broom
All bad out of this room.
Sweep, sweep all good in
The bad to never return again.

Once you have swept out all the negative energy, you need to consecrate the area. To do this, walk around the room in a circle three times. Each time, carry a representation of an Element—first Air and Fire, then Water, then Earth—from your altar.

First, take your incense and walk deosil (clockwise) around the circle. (Burning incense represents the Elements of Air and Fire.) As you walk, say:

I walk the circle once around
To cleanse and consecrate this ground.

Then pick up your bowl of water. (The water represents the Element of Water.) As you walk deosil around the circle, say:

I walk the circle once again.
Between the worlds all time can bend.

When you are finished with your second tour around the circle, pick up your salt (salt represents the Element of Earth) and sprinkle it as you walk deosil around the circle for the third and final time. While you do this, say:

I walk the circle thrice this time
For the protection of the Lord and Lady are mine.

Now you are ready to get to work on your circle.

How to Define the Circle

When doing ritual outdoors in an open area, especially when working with a group of people who are not adept at feeling the raised energy of a cast circle, witches sometimes make an actual mark on the ground in chalk or lay down a length of rope to

define the edge of their circle. Placing something that you can see at the edge of your circle is a good idea when you are working outdoors in a large circle. Otherwise, you might forget where the boundaries of your circle are. Working indoors, you probably don't need to use actual physical markers, because you will have limited space. After a while, you should be able to feel the energy wall as you approach the edge of your circle.

Once you have walked the circle three times with your Elements, take your athame, wand, sword, or staff and trace the edge of the circle with it as you walk deosil around again. Walk slowly, but with purpose. In your mind, see yourself pulling up a circle.

How to Pull Up the Circle

To pull up the magick circle, you need to concentrate and use your powers of creative visualization. Some people, as they walk around the edges of the circle, imagine a white light flowing through them, through their athame or wand, and out. They see it pouring out in the form of white fibers that spin out until the whole circle is cocooned. Some people see the circle as a bubble that grows up from the floor, curving overhead until it meets on top. Some people visualize plates of armor surrounding them, and others see the circle as made up of the scales of a dragon. You can even imagine the circle as a magick web that grows so it is all around you. It doesn't matter what image you pick, just be sure it works for you. You'll probably need to use the same image for a while before you can tell if it works. Remember, practice does make perfect.

So Mote It Be

Are you having trouble visualizing your magick circle? Rent a copy of *The Wizard of Oz*, and pop it into the DVD player. Pay careful attention to the scene right after the house falls. That's when Glinda the Good Witch floats down inside a shimmering pink bubble—and that is one supermagick bubble. Watch the scene a few times. Feel free to change the color of the bubble. You want your bubble to be custom-made just for you.

Where's the Altar?

You can place your altar in the North part of your circle, in the East, or in center of the circle. Your decision about placement will depend on what you're planning to do. If you want to sit in the center of the circle and drum, you should place the altar to one side.

Magickal Help

There are many different entities that you can ask to help you with your magick. We'll talk about the Elements and Elementals here and tell you more about them in Chapter 15.

The Elements

Each of the four Elements—Air, Fire, Water, and Earth—has either a masculine or feminine quality, a color, and a direction. The masculine or feminine quality of an Element is not an assignment of gender. Rather it is a recognition that the energies that flow from each Element are either masculine or feminine.

Because the Elements are all around us and in that sense never leave us, if you want to work with them, you can summon them. It is absolutely imperative, when dealing with any of the Elements, that you understand you are dealing not only with the physical but the spiritual realm of that particular Element. You must not only demonstrate but also feel the respect each commands.

- **Air is a masculine Element, cool and dry; the color is yellow and its direction is East.** Air is associated with all forms of communication, education, the realm of the intellect, wind, and sound. Air is also linked to creativity, meditation, divination, and awareness—in short, anything that flows through the air and any energy that passes quickly. The way that you communicate to deity and the way deity communicates to you is tied up with the Element of Air. It's also important to understand that Air is the breath of life. Without Air we would die. Air is not a force to be taken lightly, for just as Air gives life, it can also take it away. Air has the ability to destroy whatever gets in its path.
- **Fire is also a masculine Element, hot and dry; the color is red and its direction is South.** Fire represents the passion and desire burning inside all of us. As sexuality, Fire is the most physical and the most spiritual of Elements. Fire is also linked to courage and transformation. It is the Element of change, and the spark of spirit within us all. Fire is probably one of the most beloved and yet the most difficult Element to work with. Fire is swift and unpredictable, yet it captivates us with a deep primal fascination. It is both tangible and intangible. You can feel its warmth, see its flames. It will burn you if you get too close; you feel its power, but you cannot hold or touch it. Fire can burn both fast and furious or just lie and smolder until just the right moment. You will be able to connect easily with Fire's magick. Just be careful and don't get burned.

Webweaving

Remember that your altar is set up like a miniature circle and that each quadrant of your altar relates to one of the four directions and, hence, is associated with a different Element. Your tools also represent different Elements. If you place your tools within the appropriate Elemental direction on the altar, then the energy contained within the altar will flow in a more harmonious way.

- **Water is a feminine Element, warm and wet; the color is blue and its direction is West.** Water is associated with psychic energy, emotion, intuition, the subconscious, and cleansing. We all have Water within us and are subject to its ebb and flow. Contemplation of the Element of Water also reminds us that we all have heights and depths of emotion. It is also the Element of reason. Both Water and the West are associated with death. The West is the place of endings, the opposite of the East, which is the place of beginnings. Water is usually a soft and predictable energy. This Element deals with emotions such as love and joy, but Water can also be associated with emotions of pain and sorrow.

- **Earth is also a feminine Element, cold and moist; the color is green and its direction is North.** Earth is associated with beauty, growth, nurturing, abundance, stability, healing, and the bounty of our planet. Earth also represents prosperity and wisdom. It is a place of darkness, the womb of the Goddess, and from the womb you emerge into the light. This is a very stable energy that builds slowly with its fibers tightly woven together. Even though its energy is steady, Earth has its unpredictable moments. Without warning, the earth itself can erupt in an earthquake and release its mighty power.

When summoning the Elements, hold pictures in your mind of both the positive and the negative aspects of each Element you are invoking. Conjure up the following sequences of images:

For Air: Start with a scene of no movement, then build to imagining a light breeze. Then see a brisk wind. See the wind grow stronger and stronger until it has gained the force of a tornado. Then imagine the power pulling back to a strong wind until it diminishes back to a scene of calm.

For Fire: Start by imagining the flame of a match. Then move on to a small campfire. Let the fire grow into a forest fire. Then see the fire as a raging volcano, and move back down the scale of intensity until you are back again with the flame of a match.

For Water: Start by imagining water pouring from a tap. Then see a flowing stream; move on to a rushing river, then to the waves at the beach. Imagine the huge destructive force of a tsunami, then move back through your sequence of images until you are back with the image of water coming out from the tap.

For Earth: Start by imagining a deep cavern. Then see a flat plain, a large hill, and then a mountain. Imagine the destruction and enormous force of an earthquake. Then move back through this list of images to your cavern.

Practicing these visualizations will help you understand just what powerful energies you are summoning when you ask the Elements to guard, protect, or witness a rite, or when you engage them in your magick.

The Elementals

The Elementals are personifications of the four Elements. The Elemental associated with Fire is the salamander. Undines, or water nymphs, are associated with Water, while sylphs are associated with the Element of Air, and gnomes are associated with the Element of Earth. If you want to work with the Elementals, you can summon them.

Entering and Exiting a Magick Circle

We talked about leaving a magick circle in an earlier chapter, but we'll give you a little recap here. If you need to leave, you must cut a door in the energy that makes up the circle, or have someone else cut a door for you. You can't just walk through the circle. Doing so would break the circle and allow whatever energy is in the circle to get out. It would also allow any magickal beings in the vicinity to get in. The person who cuts the door in the magick circle must stand guard at the door, and then seal the door when you return. If you are working alone, leave your broom to guard the door, and when you come back, remember to seal the door yourself.

If you are outside a circle that has been cast, you also need someone to cut a door for you so you can enter. But why would you be outside of the circle? Because you were late for ritual! Don't be late. If you are working with a group of people, plan to arrive half an hour before

Webweaving

Aleister Crowley, the infamous magickian, is said to have gone out into the desert to summon a particularly nasty demon. Somehow Crowley ended up outside his magick circle. His assistant dragged him back in, but the demon had already affected Crowley badly. People say that when he returned from the desert he looked decades older.

ritual starts. This way you will have time to get changed and settled before ritual starts. It's very rude to be late for ritual. Entering late can spoil everyone's concentration, and that could ruin the whole ritual.

Working Magick Within the Magick Circle

When working magick, stay within the circle that has been cast. The circle is there to protect you and your magick. The circle also helps to hold your personal power and all the energies raised until you are ready to send them out into the universe to manifest your magick. Think of the circle as your magickal office. That's the place you receive and make magickal calls, the place where you aren't subject to interruptions from friends and family. It is the place for you to focus and do your work.

You'll want to keep in mind when working in your circle that you always want to move deosil (clockwise). You should only walk widdershins (counterclockwise) when it is time to take the circle down. So say you are standing in the East and want to move toward your altar, which is located in the North. It is proper to move three quarters of the way around the circle, passing through South and West to reach North and your altar. If you moved from your position in the East to the North via the shortest route, you'd be moving widdershins and thus weakening the energy flow of the circle.

After the Magick Is Done

After you have completed the magick or celebration segment of your ritual, you start to wind down. You share cakes and wine with the other people in the circle and with deity. There's also time to talk before you say farewell to the God, the Goddess, the quarters, and any other powers that have been in attendance. If you are alone, it is a time to reflect or communicate with the Goddess. Or you can use this time to relax in the protected space of your magick circle.

Relaxation: Good Communication

With your work done, you now can relax and have some cakes (which can be cookies, bread, or muffins) and wine (or juice). Before you partake of your cakes and wine, break off a piece of cake and put it in the libation bowl. Pour a little wine into the libation bowl, too, and set the bowl aside for deity.

If you practice ritual on your own, you can talk with deity while you enjoy your magickal snack or spend time recording your ritual in your Book of Shadows. This is also a great time to meditate on an issue that is bothering you. Or communicate with your

familiar (an animal, plant, or created being with which you can communicate telepathically), if you have one. If you like, you can just curl up, rest, relax, and recharge after expending all that energy in magick work.

If you are in a group, now is the time to talk to your fellows in the circle. This is your opportunity to share, discuss the issues of the day, plans for the future, and any troubles that people have.

Conversation Within the Circle

When working with other people, you will probably engage in conversation inside the circle about a variety of topics. You might turn to the feelings that ritual left you with, or someone in the circle might give the leaders of ritual a bit of constructive criticism or point out a mistake that someone made during ritual. One thing you usually do not talk about is what you want to have happen as a result of your magick. In most cases, that is a subject you discuss only with deity and sometimes with coven elders. Keeping silent about your magick is an important part of the witches' pyramid—a kind of magickal checklist—that you will read about in Chapter 19.

Conversation within the circle can get very personal, and often people will discuss difficulties they are having in their lives. Whatever comes up in the circle remains in the circle. You must keep anything you hear in the strictest confidence and never gossip about it. If you gossip, that is a sure way to get thrown out of the circle and banished. If you are performing an open circle (with public participation), make sure that you discuss topics that will include everyone so your guests can also enjoy the energies and feelings of closeness that come from the circle's group mind.

How to Take Down the Circle

First you say farewell to the Lord and Lady and thank them for coming. Then respectfully say farewell to the quarters and thank them for providing the requested energies. Say to each quarter, "We bid you hail and farewell. Stay if you will, go if you must." If you think of the quarters as honorable guests, you shouldn't have any trouble giving them the respect they deserve.

Finally say, "May all beings and Elementals attracted to this ritual be on their way, harming none." Then start to take down the circle. With your athame, start in the East and walk widdershins around the edge of the circle. Imagine the energy of the circle getting sucked into your athame, as if it were a vacuum cleaner. See the energy moving through the athame and traveling up your arm, through your body, then down your legs, out the bottom of your feet, and into the earth. After sending the

energy back into the ground, say, "The circle is down." Stamp your foot to seal off the energy.

The Circle Is Open, but Never Broken

At the very end of ritual, after you have taken down the circle, join hands with the others in the circle. The High Priestess or whoever is leading says, "The circle is open, but never broken." This statement signifies that even though you are no longer in circle, you still have that connection to deity and the Elements, and as you entered the circle in "perfect love and perfect trust," you still have that bond with each of the other members in the circle.

Banish!

Many witches keep silent about their magick, especially outside of circle. Discussing your magickal workings out in the world can give disbelieving friends a means by which to shake your confidence and spoil your reputation. So keep the witches' pyramid (see Chapter 19) in mind and keep silent!

The circle members respond by saying, "Merry ye meet, and merry ye part, and merry ye meet again." Then everyone exchanges hugs and kisses, and you wish everyone well until the next time you can be together.

At this point, record what you did using a Magickal Record form (see Appendix B). If you are working with friends, you might want to relax with them some more. You might find that you're very hungry after ritual, so make sure you have some good things to eat in the house. After your guests have left and you've recorded your ritual, put away your tools. Take the bowl of salted water from your altar and the libation bowl with cakes and wine in it outside, and give the contents of both bowls back to the earth by emptying them on the ground. Do not pour the water and wine down the drain. These are gifts that you need to give to deity by placing them on the ground for the animals to eat. In this way, we—people, wild things, and even insects—all share in the earth's abundance. Rinse the bowls out and place them back on your altar.

You will probably feel great after ritual, full of zip and energy. You will feel spiritually nourished, and later you'll probably sleep wonderfully well. Often people sleep deeply and have prophetic dreams. So keep your notebook or Book of Shadows handy in case you need to record anything first thing in the morning.

The Least You Need to Know

- A magick circle is a sphere or bubble that completely surrounds and protects you.
- Before you put up your circle, you need to cleanse and consecrate the area.
- Use your athame and your powers of creative visualization to pull up the circle.
- During ritual you will feel the connection between you and deity, you and Nature, and between you and the others in the circle. Even after you have taken down the circle, these bonds will not be broken.

Chapter 12

The Witches' Symbol

In This Chapter

- Pentagram or pentacle?
- The pentagram in history
- The symbol of the Wiccan faith
- Banishing and invoking with the pentagram
- Wearing a pentacle

Christians have crosses, some Jews wear a Star of David, and the crescent moon has long represented the Islamic faith. Most religions have a special symbol or device, and Wicca is no exception.

Wicca's symbol is the pentagram. Pentagrams have been around for thousands of years. They have long been used as a sign of protection against evil. Given the strong reaction that some people have to pentagrams, you'll want to think seriously about whether you want to wear a visible one as a symbol of your faith or whether you want to keep your faith and its symbol private. The information in this chapter should help you decide when and where the pentagram is right for you.

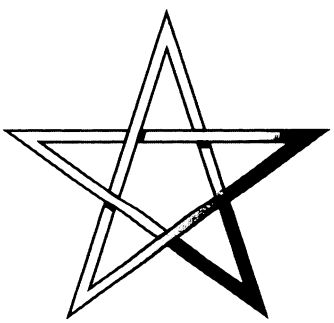
All About Pentagrams

To some people the very word *pentagram* conjures up thoughts of evil. The association of pentagrams with devil worship is relatively recent. The pentagram has a long history and once was even used by the Catholic church. Today it is a symbol of the Wiccan faith.

Pentagrams vs. Pentacles

A pentagram is a five-pointed star. It's a lot like the star that you drew as a kid without picking your pencil up from the paper, but the sides are interwoven. Because the pentagram can be drawn with a single line, it has also been called the Endless Knot.

The pentagram: a symbol of the Wiccan faith.



A pentacle is a pentagram with a circle drawn around it. It can be made of wood, stone, metal, or clay. It is a powerful symbol of protection, and there is usually one on a witch's altar. Pentacles and pentagrams can take physical form or they can be completely abstract. If you draw a pentagram in the air over an object, the object is just as protected as if you placed a tangible pentagram on or alongside that object. The pentacle and the pentagram have always been associated with mystery, magick, and protection against evil.

How Old Is the Pentagram?

Archeologists have found pentagrams on Mesopotamian potsherds that date back to 3500 B.C.E. Pentagrams also appear in ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman art. Pentagrams were even used by Christians in the early Middle Ages.

The pentacle.

In the twelfth century, because of the writings of Hildegard of Bingen, a Benedictine nun and abbess, the pentagram became the central symbol of the microcosmos, the reflection on Earth of the divine plan and the divine image.

What Does the Pentagram Stand For?

Hildegard of Bingen saw the pentagram as representing the human form because we have five senses—sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch—and five "members"—two legs, two arms, and a head. And, because humankind was made in God's image, she also saw the pentagram as representing God.

Other Christians saw the pentagram as representing the five wounds of Christ. As such, it was considered a potent protection against evil. Earlier Hebrew tradition associated the pentagram with the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. It was also seen, at that time, to represent truth.

During the Inquisition, the pentagram first became associated with evil and the devil in the form of Baphomet, a goatlike creature thought to be a demon or representation of the devil. In the popular imagination of the time, the pentagram was thought to represent the head of this goat, the devil, or a witch's foot.

Webweaving

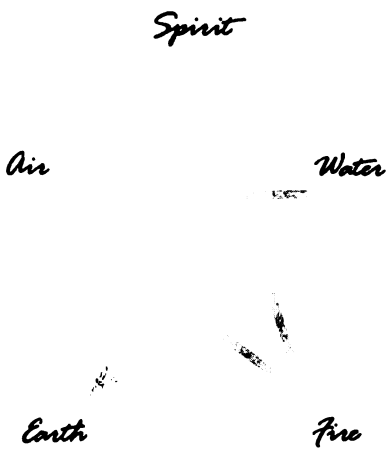
In 1964, Sybil Leek, who was once considered to be "Britain's Number One Witch," founded the Witchcraft Research Association. The association had its own magazine, which was called *Pentagram*. Unfortunately, both the magazine and the association were short lived. They both folded in 1966.

Today, the pentagram and the pentacle are symbols of the Wiccan faith and of Neo-Paganism. Many witches wear one on a daily basis for protection. Some display their pentacle jewelry to show pride in their religion. Others wear one, but keep it to themselves.

Five Points

The points of the pentagram and pentacle represent *Akasha*, or Spirit, and the four Elements, substances that are crucial to all life. In some pentagrams, each point is the color associated with that Element's point. Some witches also view the five points as representing the three aspects of the Goddess—Maiden, Mother, and Crone—and the two aspects of the God—dark and light.

Pentagram points represent Akasha (the Spirit) and the Elements (Water, Fire, Earth, and Air).



The following list explains what each point represents and lists the most common color associated with it. To find the correct point, face the pentagram as you read this list:

- **Water.** The point representing the Element of Water is on the top right. The color associated with Water and this point is blue.
- **Fire.** The point on the right that slants down represents the Element of Fire. If the pentagram is multicolored, the color of this point is red.
- **Earth.** The point on the left that slants down represents the Element of Earth. Because the color associated with Earth is green, this point is green.
- **Air.** The point representing the Element of Air is on the top left. The color associated with this Element is yellow.

def•i•ni•tion

Akasha is a Sanskrit word used to describe the concept of Spirit. Spirit is seen to unify the four Elements. It also transcends them. Some see Spirit as the essence or quintessence of a thing. Akasha is often described as space or ether—the background upon which reality is perceived.

- **Akasha.** The top point of the pentagram represents Spirit. If the pentagram is multicolored, this point will be white or purple.

In some traditions, the points represent the four Elements plus Magickal Will. Spirit is seen to inhabit the central pentagon, which touches and empowers each of the points, just as it empowers the Elements themselves.

Pick Your Pentacle

You can buy pentacles made from a variety of substances for your altar or to wear as jewelry. Sometimes the material from which they are made also has symbolic significance. Here are some types of pentacles you may find:

- Silver to represent the Goddess.
- Gold to represent the God.
- Copper for drawing energy.
- Multicolored with each point bearing the color of its Element.
- Inset with stones at the points. Each stone is the color of that point's Element.
- Inset with one central stone. For example, amethysts represent healing or Spirit. Onyx is for protection. Hematite is for grounding. Moonstone represents the Goddess.
- Crafted with an image of the Goddess in the center. Isis, the Egyptian Mother Goddess, is a popular incarnation.
- Crafted with an animal, such as a wolf, in the center.

Pentacles come in all sizes. You will probably find pentacle pendants, pins, earrings, and rings. Some are so subtle that other people won't be able to tell what you are wearing. One discrete pentacle comes in the form of the Egyptian cat Goddess Bastet (or Bast). She has a tiny pentagram drawn on her chest. To the casual observer, it will look like you are just displaying your love for our feline friends.

Webweaving

Scholars who have studied the development of modern-day Wiccan practices trace the drawing of invoking pentagrams back to Eliphas Zahed Levi, a Frenchman who had trained for a career in the Catholic church. In 1854, Levi recommended that magickians make invoking pentagrams in the air to call the quarters. Prior to this time, it is believed that magickians used banishing pentagrams to ward off demons, but did not use invoking ones to pull in positive energy.

The Path of the Pentagram

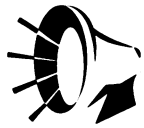
To truly understand the pentagram, many witches will walk the path of the pentagram. To do this, you start with a given point—Water, Fire, Earth, or Air—and use it as your focus of study. You usually don't start with Spirit as this is the most difficult to truly understand. You could trace the lines of the pentagram by starting with Earth, moving to Water, then Air, then Fire, and finally Spirit. Decide at what point you are going to start, learn everything about that Element, and work with it in ritual and in magick. Meditate with the Element that you have chosen. Learn all about its aspects, colors, Elementals, and power. This is not something you can do in a week. It can take up to a year to fully understand each Element. When you feel you are ready to move on to a different Element, move along the pentagram to the next one. Follow the same agenda with each Element until you reach Spirit.

Spirit will be the most difficult. As humans, we will never fully understand the power and unconditional love that Spirit has to offer. Just remember that as long as you continue to work to understand the energy of Spirit, then you yourself will continue to grow in the spiritual dimension.

Pentagrams in the Air

The pentagram drawn in the air can be an important part of consecrating objects that you want to make holy. You make banishing pentagrams to remove all the negativity from your object. Then you can make an invoking pentagram to draw in positive energy.

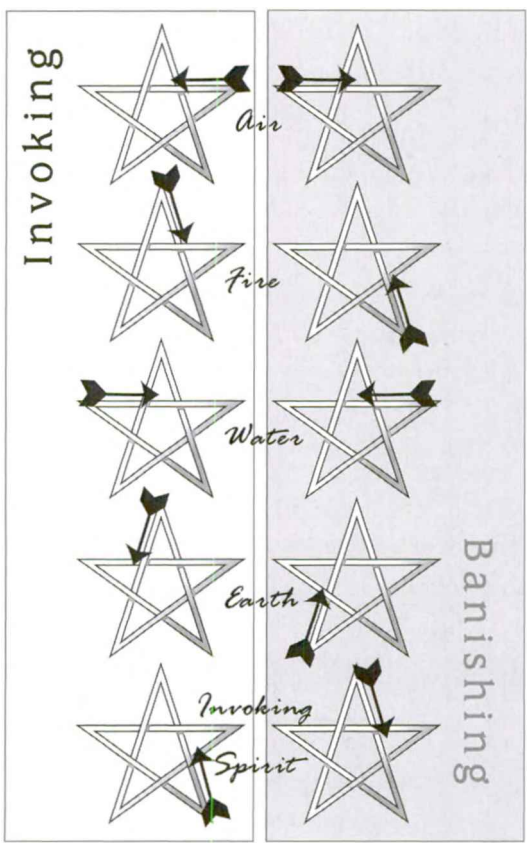
At the beginning of ritual when you call in the quarters, you can make the appropriate invoking pentagram in the air for each quarter. For example, when you call in the East, or Air, make an invoking Air pentagram. When you call in the North, or Earth, make an invoking Earth pentagram. When you bid the quarters farewell, make the banishing pentagram for each one.



Banish!

If you see other witches making banishing or invoking pentagrams differently from the way you've learned, don't worry. There is some variation from tradition to tradition in the way that they are drawn. Similarly, if you are practicing ritual on your own and you make a mistake, never fear. If your intention was to make a banishing Earth pentagram but what you drew was closer to a banishing Fire pentagram, you have still made a banishing Earth pentagram. Spirit, unlike a computer, always knows your intentions.

You can also use invoking pentagrams to help with your magick. If you are working a spell to help you study or learn something new, you might want to draw an invoking Air pentagram to pull in the positive mental energies of Air. In addition, you might want to invoke Water to help you use intuition in your learning process.



Invoking pentagrams and banishing pentagrams for Akasha (Spirit), plus each of the Elements.

Banishing Pentagram Spells

Here are two examples of spells that use banishing pentagrams to take away negative energies. Try them if they feel right for you. Or use them as models to create your own spells. As always, ground yourself, feeling the earth firm beneath you, before you begin working a spell.

Computer Glitches Be Gone

When plagued by computer problems, face your computer and with a stick of lit incense trace the banishing pentagram of Air in front of the screen. While you do this, say these words:

In cyberspace and on my screen
Monitor, hard drive, and keyboard
Of error, bug, and glitch be clean.
Communication be restored!

Say this chant a total of three times. Trace the banishing pentagram of Air each time. If you don't have any incense handy, use a feather, which also represents Air, instead.

Brighter Tomorrow

To ease sadness after a loss, face the West and hold before you a chalice of water into which you have put a pinch of sea salt. Slowly and carefully trace the banishing pentagram of Water in the air saying:

Pentagram of Water, wash away
Some of the pain I have felt today.
Lift from me some weight of sorrow,
Help me find a brighter tomorrow.

As with the other spell, say these words and draw your pentagram three times. Then, either leave the water in the chalice and place it on your altar, or pour the water just outside your door so you will cross over it each time you enter or leave your home.

Understand that we all have painful emotions for a reason. Before doing magick to ease your discomfort, spend some time really experiencing your emotions. Think hard on the lessons to be learned. All humans grieve sometimes, even Wiccans. This spell is not designed to keep you free of sorrow, but rather to lighten your pain and ease your heart so you are able to move on when the time is right.

Invoking Pentagram Spells

You can try these invoking spells to call Elemental energies to come to your aid.

Free Speech

To invoke the ability and composure you need to make a speech in front of a group of people, call on the Element of Air. Face the East, the direction associated with Air, and light a stick of incense. Using the incense, trace an invoking Air pentagram in front of you. As you do this, say these words:

Power of the East and of the Air,
Let my speech flow free and be clear.
Away with the stutter, the mutter, the block,
Brave is my manner and smooth is my talk.

Repeat the words and draw your pentagram a total of three times. Then, place your incense in a censer or other fireproof container and let it burn until it goes out by itself.

Perfect Home

For success in finding a new home, use the invoking pentagram of Earth. To do this, find a smooth, brown stone. Hold it firmly in your right hand as you draw the invoking pentagram of Earth in the air. While you do this say these words:

Pentagram of Earth, drawn in the air,
Lead me to a secure lair.
By rock and tree, by leaf and loam,
I seek to find my perfect home.

Repeat this chant for a total of three times, each time drawing the invoking Earth pentagram. While you do this, try to envision everything you want in a new home. Then, place the stone on your altar. Once you have moved into your new home, take the stone out into your yard or to another outdoor spot near your new home. Thank the stone for its help and return it to the earth by leaving it on the ground.

What About Inverted Pentagrams?

Typically a pentagram has one point at the top and two points at the bottom. The single point on top represents the idea that the Spirit rules over matter. An inverted

Webweaving

In the Gardnerian tradition, a triangle with one point downward symbolizes First Degree Initiation. The inverted pentagram represents Second Degree Initiation, and the upright pentagram stands for Third Degree Initiation. Some Gardnerian witches use an upright pentagram with a small triangle on top of the single upward point, as if the pentagram is wearing a hat, to symbolize Third Degree Initiation.

pentagram has two points on top and one on the bottom. The inverted pentagram suggests that Spirit is subservient to matter. Satanists use the inverted pentagram to express their belief that their immediate, physical needs are more important than any spiritual or moral value.

In the Gardnerian tradition of witchcraft (discussed in Chapter 3), the inverted pentagram has been used as a symbol of Second Degree Initiation. This symbol is used to remind the witch that he or she will have to learn to face his or her own internal darkness before attaining Third Degree Initiation. Because of its associations with Satanism, some Gardnerian witches have abandoned the use of the inverted pentagram.

To Wear, or Not to Wear

Wearing a pentacle when you do ritual may help you feel empowered. It can also help you feel connected to deity and to other witches. Many witches wear one on a daily basis for this sense of community and for a feeling of protection.

Resist the temptation to wear a pentacle simply to freak out your Christian relatives. Certainly you have the right to wear the symbol of your faith, but you also have to take their fears seriously. People who have been told their whole lives that the pentacle is a sign of evil can have strong, visceral reactions when confronted with this symbol.

There are many varieties of jewelry that incorporate the five-pointed star. Some of them will not be obvious to the casual observer. Some witches choose to wear small, hidden symbols, while others go for easily recognizable ones, which they wear under their clothing. There are many ways you can wear a pentagram or a pentacle without anyone else having to know about it.

Remember the couplet from "The Rede of the Wiccae"?

When misfortune is enow,
Wear the blue star on thy brow.

You can visualize the blue star, or a pentagram, on your forehead or draw it with holy water or oil. When doing this, imagine that a white light surrounds you. The pentagram you visualize will be just as potent a protection as one that you can actually see.

Of course, lots of witches are quite public about their involvement with the craft and openly wear the pentagram or other Wiccan jewelry. How public you want to be is entirely up to you. Only you can decide how comfortable you will be with the multitude of people in your life. You may decide to wear a pentagram at home and around the neighborhood, but to take it off when you go to work or school. Or you may want to do the exact opposite. Whatever you decide, know that you have made the right decision.

So Mote It Be

If you're leaving on a road trip, bless your car before you go. Imagine a big pentagram on the roof of your vehicle. You still want to drive carefully, but every little bit helps, right? You'll also want to leave a pentagram to protect your home while you're gone. Imagine a huge pentagram on the roof. Let it keep your house safe from thieves and fire.

The Least You Need to Know

- The pentagram (a five-pointed star) and the pentacle (a pentagram surrounded by a circle) are powerful symbols of protection.
- The pentagram has become the symbol of witchcraft, Wicca, and Neo-Paganism. It does not represent evil; in fact, it banishes any and all negative energy.
- Draw banishing pentagrams in the air to banish negative energy. There are five types of banishing pentagrams—one for each Element and one for Spirit.
- Draw invoking pentagrams in the air to invoke positive energy. There are five types of invoking pentagrams as well.
- It's nice to wear a pentacle during ritual; wearing one at other times is entirely up to you.

Part 4 Working Magick

The Wiccan holidays can be great times to work magick. During Esbats—the monthly celebration of the Goddess—you can draw on her energy for your magickal workings. During the eight annual Sabbats, you celebrate the God and his life cycle. As you read this section, you'll further your understanding of magick and learn how to call on other beings to aid you. You'll also be introduced to a huge array of techniques and natural materials that will help make your magick even more effective.

Chapter 13

Esbats: Moon Magick

In This Chapter

- Phases of lunar energy
- Bring the Goddess inside you
- The year in Moons
- Lunar cycles, female cycles, and magick

Wicca has both religious and magickal elements, and an Esbat is a Moon ritual in which these two aspects are represented. Esbats are times of celebration of the Goddess and her energy; they are also great times for many types of magickal workings.

Many witches prefer to work with the full Moon, but you can work with any phase of the Moon. As a solitaire, you can plan your ritual and magick for any day of the month. If you are working with a coven, you will meet with the group at a prearranged time. You can also hold more than one Esbat a month, either on your own or with others.

Esbats: Wicca Celebrates Moon Magick

At least once a month, witches honor the Goddess by celebrating an *Esbat*. During an Esbat, which is celebrated at night, you pay homage to the

def•i•ni•tion

An **Esbat** is a Wiccan Moon ritual in which the Goddess is honored. Esbats are also great times to do magick. You can celebrate an Esbat on a full Moon or on any other phase of the Moon, but you should make sure to celebrate one once a month.

Goddess and you draw on her energy to do magick. You can celebrate the different phases of the Moon, depending on what kind of energy you want to draw on. Many witches prefer to honor the Goddess on the full Moon. (Remember the words from "The Charge of the Goddess" in Chapter 4? "Assemble in a place of secret, better it be when the Moon is full and give praise to the spirit of me.") Some witches will do their magick on the phase of the Moon best suited to the magickal task at hand, and then formally honor the Goddess when the Moon is full.

Working With Lunar Energy

The energy of the Moon changes depending upon the phase that the Moon is in. You've probably noticed that the energy of the full Moon is quite strong. On full Moon nights, police departments and hospitals often have their hands full. In Wicca, each phase of the Moon is noted, because different kinds of Moon energy are used for different kinds of magick.

Some witches celebrate Diana's Bow—the first sliver of Moon visible in the sky. This usually occurs about three days after the Moon has gone dark and is a great time for new projects that would benefit from a gradual increase in energy.

Banish!

Just because the full Moon is a good time for magickal workings doesn't mean you have to do magick at every full Moon. If you don't have a specific need or want, resist the temptation to use that lunar energy. During your Esbat, you can simply choose to honor the Goddess and feel at one with her. And that can be a superpowerful experience on its own.

The Waxing Moon: Initiation and Growth

When the first silver thread of moonlight shows itself, the time is right for starting new projects and making new plans. Say you decide to go back to school to study something totally different from what you've done before. This is the time to do magick to bless that endeavor. Or maybe you want a makeover of your wardrobe or your lifestyle. This is the best time to apply your magickal energies to that end. It is also a good time to bring new things into your home: plants, pets, or decorations for a harmonious blending of energy.

The Full Moon: Your Heart's Desire Seek

Remember the ninth couplet from "The Rede of the Wiccae"? (See Chapter 5.) In case you haven't got the Rede memorized yet, here it is:

When the Moon rides at her peak,
then your heart's desire seek.

The energy of the full Moon is about going for the gusto. The time of the full Moon is good for calling in what you really want, be it money, love, peace, or what have you. Full Moon energy enhances your own magickal flow. Spells you do under the full Moon's glow are especially powerful. This is a time to seek visions and wisdom through divination, scrying, or just being open to the voice of the Goddess as you meditate. Full Moon energy is available three days before the actual full Moon and three days after.

The Waning Moon: Taking Away

When the Moon is on the wane it is the best time for banishing magick. At this time, use spells to get rid of things like bad habits or bad energy. Say you moved into a new home where the previous occupants were quarrelsome and angry and you want to clear the house of those energies. At the waning Moon, place a large onion in a bowl of salt in each room of the house to absorb any left over hostile feelings. Leave them there for a full lunar cycle, until the Moon is waning again a month later. Then gather the onions into a dark-colored bag and carry them away from your home. Toss them in a moving body of water or leave them in a wooded area where you don't ordinarily go. Dispose of the bag before returning to your home. This is waning Moon magick.

So Mote It Be

Do you have a hard time telling if the Moon is waxing or waning? Here's a neat trick. Notice how the Moon in the sky sometimes looks like a backward letter ***C?*** That's a waxing Moon. If you imagine a straight line dropping down from the top of the backward ***C*** to the bottom, you get a capital ***D.*** The full Moon, because it is nice and round, looks like an ***O,*** and the waning Moon looks like a ***C.*** So think of the phases of the Moon as ***DOC***—waxing, full, and waning.

The Dark Moon: Take a Break

Many witches believe that you should not practice magick at all during the three days a month when the Moon is dark and is not visible in the sky. This is the time of the month when the Goddess is thought to have descended into the underworld. She is in mourning, and her energy is at its lowest point. During the Dark of the Moon, Hecate, the Goddess in her aspect as queen of the underworld, rules. Meditation and relaxation are the order of the day.

Drawing Down the Moon

Many witches Draw Down the Moon during Esbats. When you Draw Down the Moon during a full-Moon ritual, you pull the energy of the Goddess into yourself. To do this, picture yourself standing in a field. Above you the full Moon is glowing brightly. (Or go out and actually stand in the light of the full Moon.) Gaze at the Moon and stand with your feet apart and planted firmly on the floor. Raise your arms until they are over your head, but keep your elbows slightly bent. Picture white light streaming from the Moon down through the night sky and into you. This light is the energy of the Goddess. Fill yourself with her energy and let it totally join and become one with you.

The first time Denise Drew Down the Moon. She felt a strong tingling in her hands and feet and around her mouth. The sensation spread up her limbs and it intensified to the point where she became frightened. She took a little gasp of air, and in an instant, the feeling vanished. For six months after that, every time she tried to Draw Down the Moon she was unsuccessful. She figures she just wasn't psychologically ready to feel that kind of intense energy. Now she still feels the Moon energy as an intense tingling, but she doesn't find it scary anymore. Rather, she feels intense connection to deity and a great spiritual high.

Other witches describe Drawing Down the Moon differently. Some feel it as an intense heat spreading through their limbs and body. Some get the tingling sensation that Denise experiences accompanied by the feeling of a cool breeze. Most people get quite emotional, and some cry. Whatever the feelings you encounter, stand there with them and let the Goddess fill you up.

After you have Drawn Down the Moon and are filled with the Goddess's energy, you can do magick, or you can just enjoy the deep connection that you will feel with her. You probably won't need to Draw Down the Moon every month. If you've been doing a lot of magick, helping people and healing them, you'll probably want to

Draw Down the Moon and allow the energy of the Goddess, the endless source, to recharge and replenish your spiritual batteries. Afterward, you will feel cleansed and replenished.

Raising the arms during a full Moon to prepare to pull the Goddess energy into your being: Draw Down the Moon.

In terms of ritual structure, you Draw Down the Moon after you have cleansed and consecrated your space, cast the magick circle, and called the quarters and the God and Goddess.

In a coven, the High Priestess Draws Down the Moon. When she has done that, she is seen to have become the Goddess. (When you do this on your own, you, too, will be the Goddess incarnate.) Some High Priestesses will share the Goddess's energy with the other coven members. In some traditions, only the High Priestess, and not the High Priest, can Draw Down the Moon. And Drawing Down the Sun is reserved for the High Priest. As a solitaire, there is no reason that you can't pull down either one. If you are male, you have just as much right to pull down the energy of the Goddess as a woman does. And if you are female, you can pull down the energy of the God as well.

Webweaving

When you Draw Down the Sun, you are calling the energy of the God into you. To do this, assume the God position. Stand with your feet together and your arms crossed over your chest with your hands up by your collarbones. In the same way that you did with Drawing Down the Moon, imagine the energy of the Sun pouring into you and filling you up.

Once in a Blue Moon

You've probably heard the expression "once in a blue moon." But what does it really mean? A *Blue Moon* is the second full Moon that occurs during one calendar month. Because the Moon's cycle has 29½ days and January, March, May, July, August, October, and December have 31 days, sometimes you will see two full Moons in these months. This doesn't happen very often. In fact, it occurs every 2.72 years. So using the expression "once in a blue moon" to mean "rarely" makes sense. Interestingly enough, during the year 1999 two Blue Moons appeared in the sky. Perhaps this was nature's way of getting ready for the millennium?

In terms of magick, the Blue Moon is a special magickal Moon. You might want to save any really special magick you are planning for the night of the Blue Moon. Some witches use the Blue Moon as a time to set goals for themselves. You can also use the Blue Moon for doing magick for something that you have never done before.

Seasonal Moons of the Lunar Calendar

Each full Moon of the month has its own name and its own qualities. Because Wicca draws from a number of folkloric traditions, you will probably see different names assigned to different months. Here we'll use some of the most common terms.

January: Wolf Moon

The Wolf Moon, also known as the Cold, Snow, or Winter Moon, is a time of protection and strength. While it is the first full Moon of the calendar year, in terms of nature it occurs in the middle of the cold winter season, a season of death and desolation. The Wolf Moon can be seen as a time of both beginnings and endings. This is the time to start considering what you want to plan for the spring. You can do magick so that as the spring approaches your magickal goal will grow closer and closer to fruition.

February: Storm Moon

The Storm Moon, also known as the Death or Quickening Moon, is a time to do magick for fertility and strength. For most people in the Northern Hemisphere, February is a time of storms and bleak, short days. In the olden days, it was a time of true hardship.

This is a good time to do magick to help you face life's challenges. You could do a spell to help you with a particularly challenging project at school or at work. You could concentrate on the idea of weathering the storm and giving yourself the extra stamina to succeed. This is also a time of cleansing, both internally and externally. As such, it's a great time to get rid of physical things you don't need and any mental or emotional baggage you might be hauling around with you, too.

March: Chaste Moon

Also known as the Seed or Worm Moon, the Chaste Moon is a time to plant mental seeds—thoughts of success and hope. This is also a time of purity and newness. It's the time to bless the magickal herbs and plants in your garden and to start preparing the soil for the seeds that you will plant. It's also the time to mentally prepare yourself for new experiences, a new job, a new class, pregnancy, taking a trip, or bringing a new animal into your home.

April: Seed Moon

The Seed Moon signals a time of fertility, growth, and wisdom. This Moon is also known as the Egg, Grass, or Wind Moon. This is the time to sow the seeds of magick. If you are planting a magickal garden, you want to get out there now and put things into the earth. This is the time to move from the planning phase into action. If you want to get pregnant, this is a great time to go for it. Fertility is in the air. This is also the time to bring that new kitten home, if that is what you have been planning. And it's a great time to empower some seeds to do Earth magick. (See Chapter 24 for more about Earth magick.)

May: Hare Moon

The Hare Moon, also known as the Flower or Planting Moon, is a time of health, love, romance, and wisdom. This is a great time to plant the seeds that you have empowered. As the seeds begin to grow, the energy you have filled them with will start to manifest in your life. It's also a great time to rekindle the romantic spark and passion in a relationship. If you've been working magick to help your career, now will probably be the time to decide which of your job offers to accept. And you might want to do some divination magick to help you make that decision.

June: Lover's Moon

Also known as the Strawberry or Rose Moon, the Lover's Moon brings with it energy for love, marriage, and success. Is it any wonder that in some traditions this Moon is called the Honey Moon? This is a time to nurture your garden and marvel at its beauty and abundance. If you have taken that new job, now is the time to make sure you have everything running smoothly. And you might want to keep your eyes open to see how you can move into a more desirable position.

July: Mead Moon

The Mead Moon, also known as the Blessing, Lightning, or Thunder Moon, is a time of enchantment, health, rebirth, success, and strength. This is the time of the first harvests, when you begin to enjoy the fruits of your labors. This is also a time of celebration and magick. Remember that mead is the nectar of the Gods. Now is the time to gather your magickal herbs and do some prosperity magick so you get that raise you've worked so hard for.

August: Wyrt Moon

The Wyrt Moon, also known as the Wort, Barley, Corn, or Red Moon, is a time of abundance, agriculture, and marriage. (*Wyrt* is the Old English word for "plant" or "herb." Our word *wort*—as in St. John's wort, the popular mood-enhancing herb—comes from this Old English root. So a Wyrt Moon is also a Plant or Herb Moon.) This is the time to collect your magickal herbs and store them for the winter or share them with others. Remember to give an offering back to the Goddess for her generosity. At this time of year, you might want to do magick to help someone else reap the benefits of the earth's abundance. (With that person's permission, of course!) This is also a good time to make a move at work for that higher-level position. If you have become pregnant, this is the time to concentrate your energies on having a healthy pregnancy.

Webweaving

August 17 is the Festival of Diana, the ancient Roman goddess of fertility, hunting, and the Moon. Some witches celebrate this date with feasting, ritual, and magickal doings.

September: Harvest Moon

Also known as the Barley or Hunter's Moon, the Harvest Moon is a time of protection, prosperity, and abundance. This is the time of year when the grains are being

harvested, and it is a good time for magick involving your prosperity, abundance, and the nurturing of others. If you have had a long illness, this is the time to finally come back to full health again. This is also the time to obtain that higher-paying position at work. The energy of the Harvest Moon will help along any magick that is geared to bring you or someone else abundance.

So Mote It Be

In Chinese culture, the Moon Festival is celebrated on the full Moon in August or September. This day is considered to be the Moon's birthday and is the occasion of feasts and toasts with wine. Many people compose poems to the Moon, and families give other families gifts of decorative Moon cakes. Why not throw a Moon party yourself? Visit a Chinese specialty shop, and buy Moon cakes filled with candied fruit or preserved melon. (Vegetarians beware: Moon cakes are often made with lard.) Write a Moon poem, cut thin slices of Moon cake, and serve them with tea—delicious!

October: Blood Moon

The Blood Moon is sometimes called the Falling Leaf or Hunter's Moon. It is a Moon of new goals, protection, resolution, and spirituality. The night of the Blood Moon is a great time for divination of any kind. At this time of year, all of nature is making ready for the winter. Animals that hibernate are gathering the last scraps of food. Birds are heading south. In human societies, this used to be the time when we turned from agriculture to the hunt as our means of sustenance. This is the time to reflect on what you did during the year and to evaluate your accomplishments.

You also want to check to see how you will survive the coming months. If your work is seasonal, you might want to do some magick to find other ways to support yourself. If you work outdoors, do magick to help you survive the cold. You also want to check on things that are important to your safety. How are the tires on your car? And what about that smoke alarm in the kitchen? Because the (non-Wiccan) holiday season is fast approaching, you also may want to do some work to remove stress and negative energy from your surroundings.

November: Snow Moon

The Snow Moon is also known as the Beaver, Mourning, or Tree Moon. This is a good time to work with abundance, prosperity, and the bonds of family and friendship. This is also an excellent time to use divination to get an idea of what is up

ahead. Remind yourself that although winter is coming, it will not last forever. Do what you can to reduce your stress and to strengthen your bonds with family and friends. Back before the advent of grocery stores and central heating, people really counted on those bonds, which could be the difference between making it through the winter or perishing. So know who is really there for you, and count your blessings.

Webweaving

Feminist witch Zsuzsanna Budapest has written an informative book called *Grandmother Moon: Lunar Magic in Our Lives: Spells, Rituals, Goddesses, Legends, and Emotions Under the Moon* (see Appendix A). She gives suggestions on how to tap into lunar energy and includes 13 lunar Goddess meditations—one for each full Moon.

December: Oak Moon

Also known as the Cold or Long Night Moon, the Oak Moon is a time for hope and healing. This time of year the Moon has reign over the earth, because there are more hours of night than day. Our thoughts turn to the rebirth of the light and the longer days that are promised after the winter solstice. This is the time of year to finish something you have worked hard on and to make sure that the task is truly completed, all the details dealt with. It's also a great time to let go of old patterns or problems and start anew. Let go of the negative and let the light of longer days shine inside you. Working with children in a nurturing way can be very rewarding and healing under this Moon.

Blood of the Moon

Many female witches celebrate and welcome the Blood of the Moon—their own bleeding phase in their monthly menstrual cycles. Many female witches feel that their cycles are tuned into the phases of the Moon. Some regard the days that they have their periods as Days of Power, especially if the periods coincide with the full or the new Moon.

Menstruation, Magick, and the Lunar Cycle

Have you ever noticed that a woman's menstrual cycle is about the same length as the Moon's 29½-day cycle? Many female witches pay close attention to the relationship between their own personal cycles and the phases of the Moon. Some witches have been known to use magick to synch their menstrual cycle to the Moon's cycle so that

they will bleed on the full or the new Moon. You can do very powerful magick if you have your period on those nights.

Many witches feel that a woman's intuition is at its peak at the time of menstruation. Others feel that the days leading up to menses, the premenstrual phase, is one of supersensitivity and powerful intuition. They feel they have prophetic dreams and can better channel energy during those few days of the month than at any other time.

The Least You Need to Know

- Esbats are celebrations of the Goddess. An Esbat is a great time to do magick or to simply pay homage to the Goddess.
- The different phases of the Moon bring different energies. The waxing Moon is great for new starts and new growth, the full Moon for seeking your heart's desire, the waning Moon for banishing, and the dark of the Moon for rest and meditation.
- When you Draw Down the Moon, you take the energy of the Goddess into you, and, whether you are male or female, you become her. You can do magick while you contain this energy, or you can just enjoy your close connection with deity.
- The full Moon of each month has its own name, which varies from tradition to tradition, and its own special associations, energies, and qualities.
- The days when a female witch has her period can be Days of Power—times of special insight and access to magickal energy.

Chapter 14

Observing the Sabbats

In This Chapter

- The Wiccan year
- Natural holidays
- The most important holidays for witches
- How to celebrate the Sabbats—and why

Do you love holidays or loathe them? We think you'll probably like the Wiccan holidays. In this chapter, we'll tell you about eight of them. The good news? They don't involve long exhausting trips to the mall.

Wiccan holidays do involve Nature and the cycles of the earth in her seasons. Most of the things that you'll need (besides your magickal tools) can be found in your backyard or in a local park. And if you want to exchange any gifts, they, too, can be crafted from Nature's gifts. The Wiccan holidays are truly a time when you tune in to the earth and the changes she undergoes with the turning of the seasons.

All About the Sun

The Sun represents the God, the male spirit of the All. Like the Sun's energy, his is bright, vibrant, powerful, and protecting. He allows the plants to grow, warms the earth, and provides the earth and all her creatures with light and crucial nutrients.

As you know, there are many more hours of daylight during the summer than in the winter. Summer days are longer because Earth's axis, the imaginary pole on which Earth spins, tilts a little in relation to the plane of Earth's orbit around the Sun. The fact that Earth is tipped in this manner actually causes the seasons and causes there to be a longest day of the year and a shortest day. Because Wicca is a Nature-based religion, each of these changes, the heralds of the shifts of the season, is honored.

What Are the Sabbats?

The *Sabbats* are holidays on which Wiccans celebrate the male energy of the All, which is represented by the God and the Sun. These are days of celebration of the God, just the way the Esbats (as discussed in the previous chapter) are celebrations of the Goddess. There are eight Sabbats. Unlike human-made holidays, the Sabbats are naturally occurring events. They mark the Equinoxes—the two days a year when daytime and nighttime are of equal duration. The Sabbats also include the longest day of the year, the longest night of the year—known as the Solstices—and the midpoints between these four occurrences.

As the Lord and Lady Travel the Wheel of the Year

In Wicca, the year is seen as a turning wheel. Once it has completed a rotation, it keeps going and spins around again and again. The Lord and Lady, as manifestations of the All, play a major part in this continuous cycle. Many Wiccans look at the year as the repeating story of the Lord and Lady.

def•i•ni•tion

Most dictionaries define **Sabbat** as the witches' Sabbath. They usually go on to say that a Sabbat involves demons and orgies. But really a Sabbat is a Wiccan holiday. The word comes from a Hebrew word that means "to rest."

Although Samhain is the Wiccan New Year, let's start with Yule. Here's a quick tour of the Wheel of the Year:

- At **Yule,** which occurs at the time of the Winter Solstice in December, the Lady gives birth to the Lord and rests from her labor.

- At **Imbolc,** in February, the Lord is seen as a small boy, and the Lady recovers from giving birth.
- **Ostara** marks the first day of spring and the awakening of the earth. At this time, the Lord is seen as a growing youth.
- At **Beltane,** the Lord has grown to manhood. He falls in love with the Lady, and they unite, producing the bounty of Nature. The Lady becomes pregnant by the Lord.
- The **Summer Solstice** is the point in midsummer when everything in Nature is at its peak, growing and lush. The Lord and the Lady are both at the height of their powers.
- **Lughnassad** is the day in August of the first harvest. The first grains are cut, and the Lord begins to weaken.
- At **Mabon,** the second harvest, the Lord is coming to his end. The days grow shorter, and Earth readies for the slumber of winter.
- At **Samhain,** in October, the Lord dies, only to be reborn of the Lady again at Yule.

When the Lord is born at Yule, he is the incarnation of the God of Light. From Yule onward, the daylight hours will be longer and longer until the Summer Solstice, when the balance tips the other way. After the Summer Solstice, as the days begin to grow shorter, he becomes the Dark God. At that point, the shortening of the days heralds his coming death.

Quartering the Year: Greater and Lesser Sabbats

The Lesser or Minor Sabbats, which sometimes are also called Fire Festivals, occur at the quarters of the year. They include the Vernal or Spring Equinox, the Fall or Autumn Equinox, and the Summer and the Winter Solstices.

The Greater or Major Sabbats—Samhain, Imbolc, Beltane, and Lughnassad—occur at the cross quarters, the midpoints between Solstice and Equinox. They mark the turning of the seasons and are considered to be very powerful days in and of themselves. Midpoints are considered to be times of great power because most things in Nature reach the peak of their strength when they are in the middle of their lives.

Here are some dates you can put in your planner.

Sabbats: Quick Reference Guide

Date	Cycle of the Year	Holiday Name
October 31	Cross quarter	Samhain
December 21 (give or take a few days)	Quarter	Yule
February 2	Cross quarter	Imbolc
March 21 (give or take a few days)	Quarter	Ostara
April 30	Cross quarter	Beltane
June 21 (give or take a few days)	Quarter	Summer Solstice
August 2	Cross quarter	Lughnassad
September 21 (give or take a few days)	Quarter	Mabon

Because the Summer and Winter Solstices and the Autumn and Spring Equinoxes are actual astrological events, and because the calendar that we follow was made up to approximate natural events in a standardized way, the dates of these events vary from year to year. To find the actual date of the Solstices or the Equinoxes for a given year, consult a witches' calendar or an almanac.

Webweaving

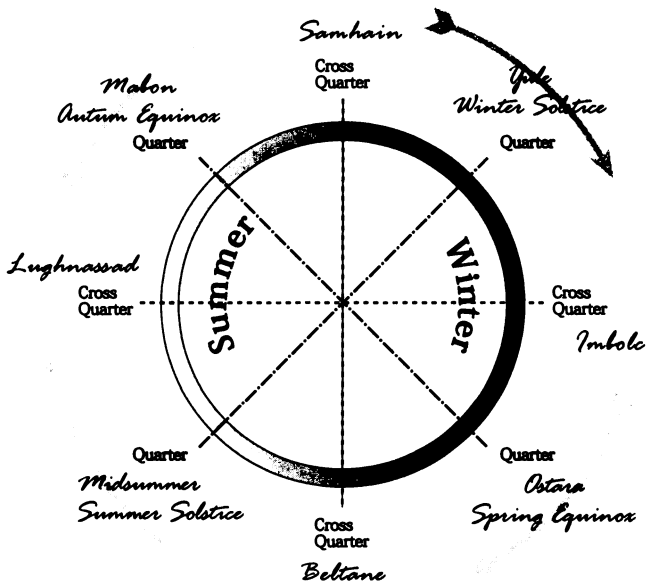
Many people believe that Christ was actually born in the spring, but that church authorities decided to celebrate his birth in the winter. They did this because they could not stop the Pagans from celebrating Yule at the time of the Winter Solstice. They hoped that the celebration of Christmas during the Pagan holiday would help convert the Pagans to Christianity.

Natural vs. Human-Made Holidays

The Sabbats mark actual events in Nature, and people have marked these events since megalithic times. The boulders of Stonehenge form alignments with both the Spring and Autumn Equinoxes and the Winter and Summer Solstices. People in ancient China, Egypt, and Peru also have left markers of these natural events.

Human-made holidays are celebrations that occur on certain dates because people decided to celebrate on that day, such as the Fourth of July, Labor Day, and Thanksgiving. There are no naturally occurring events underneath the trappings of these festivities.

The celebrations that people decide to engage in on such dates are the events themselves.



The Wheel of the Year.

Celebrating the Sabbats helps to keep you in tune with Nature and the cycles of the earth's seasons. Living in cities, as many of us do, often leaves people feeling cut off from the cyclical nature of life. Observing the Sabbats can aid you in realigning your rhythms and energies with the natural forces of the earth.

Celebrate!

The Sabbats are holidays to celebrate deity. They are times for you to enjoy—with friends and family, if you like—but definitely with the Gods.

Light the Balefire: When to Celebrate

Some of the Sabbats are best celebrated at night, and some are best enjoyed during the day. In olden times, many of these holidays were commemorated with *balefires*. Samhain, the Witches' New Year, the night when the Lord dies, is typically celebrated at night. Yule and the other cool-weather holidays also usually are celebrated in the evening.

def•i•ni•tion

A **balefire** is a bonfire or a smaller fire that is lit for magickal purposes. Some witches say that the balefire is traditional at Yule, Beltane, and Midsummer. Others list Beltane, Summer Solstice, Lughnassad, and Mabon. And of course, the Yule log is traditionally burnt at Yule.

The spring and summer Sabbats are often celebrated during the day and outdoors. This way you can enjoy the Sun and all of Nature while you celebrate the holiday. Some witches try to celebrate each Sabbat on the actual day of the Sabbat. At times, this can be difficult because these holidays can fall on workdays. In case a Sabbat does fall in the middle of the week, you can celebrate on the Saturday or Sunday before or after the actual date. Even if you celebrate on a different date, you can still give reverence and recognize the holiday on the day or night of the Sabbat. Because the Sabbats are naturally occurring events, they will happen with you or without you.

As a Solitaire, or in a Group

You may want to celebrate the Sabbats one-on-one with the Lord and the Lady. You could write your own ritual and have a private experience, or you could ask a friend or two to come celebrate with you. Sabbats are just as meaningful celebrated alone with deity as they are in a large group.

In a coven, the High Priest and High Priestess either select a ritual they have written or use one from a Book of Shadows that has been handed down to them. Sometimes the coven will put on a Sabbat play that explains the story behind the given holiday. Each coven member takes a part, so everyone is involved.

What's in a Wiccan Sabbat Ritual?

Often a Sabbat ritual is performed just like a regular Wiccan ritual, but there is a spiritual theme associated with each Sabbat. During a Sabbat the altar might be decorated for the particular occasion. For instance, on Ostara you might put eggs on the altar, on Samhain you'd place pictures of those who have passed over on the altar, while at Imbolc you might pass out seeds to all the celebrants. And for Yule, people often light a lot of candles to symbolize the return of the Sun.

Because the Sabbats are occasions to honor the God, there is an emphasis placed on him and on his life cycle. Sabbat rituals are built around him and his station in life as he grows from infant at Yule, to boy, to youth, to manhood, and then as he begins his decline as the days grow shorter. On the Sabbats, you can also look at where the Goddess is in relation to the God's life cycle.

You don't have to celebrate each Sabbat perfectly. It's nice to have all the right symbols and decorations on your altar, but if you can't come up with a cornucopia, the Lord and Lady will understand. What's really important in celebrating a Sabbat is that you are truly present with the Lord and Lady. If you're worrying about your décor, then clearly your mind is elsewhere.

So Mote It Be

Giving yourself a goal is a great way to celebrate the Sabbats. One way to do this is to relate the Lord's growth to your own. At Imbolc, set your mind on your goal. Think about how to implement it. At Ostara, start to implement it. At Beltane, act on it, and you'll see some initial results. In June, at the Summer Solstice, your goal, like the Lord, will be at its peak, and when fall approaches, it will come to fruition. At the end of the year, review your progress. If you have not achieved your goal, keep at it for another spin of the wheel.

The Wheel of the Year

The Wheel of the Year is the cycle of the seasons that turns from birth to death to rebirth again. A plant grows, dies, and leaves behind its seeds that in turn give life again. In Wicca, people look at their own lives in the same way. Many Wiccans believe that each time you are incarnated you have a lesson to learn. You live with that issue of spiritual growth, and you learn. After you die, you come back again, and you learn more until your spirit has reached enlightenment and becomes one with the All. Others see that nature's cycles reflect the ups, downs, and normal variations of the life they are leading in the here and now.

Samhain (October 31): Halloween, the Witches' New Year

Samhain (pronounced *SOW-wen* or *sah-VEEN*), one of the Greater Sabbats, is probably the witches' greatest holiday. And it is certainly the one that the public always associates with witches! For witches, this holiday has a rather different tone than it does for the population at large. Samhain, rather than being a festival of sugar overconsumption, is a profound spiritual event. It marks the death of the Lord and also the start of a new year.

On Samhain, witches hold celebrations to honor the dead. Some witches have a silent supper during which they relive moments of life with a friend or loved one who has

Webweaving

Janet and Stewart Farrar wrote a whole book about the Wiccan holidays. The book is called *Eight Sabbats for Witches*. Now you can get it, together with another one of their books, in a large volume called *A Witches' Bible* (Phoenix Publishing, Inc., 1996).

passed on. To celebrate such a supper, think fondly of an incident that involved that person with each bite you chew. When you swallow, let go of that memory and choose a new one for your next bite. Usually you reflect on the life of someone, including a pet or animal, who has died within the year. If you have not lost anyone during the year, you can give support to people who have. Or you can give reverence to all the people who have died that year and reflect on how their lives touched the lives of others. Some witches eat a regular meal on Samhain, but set a place at the table for loved ones who have died.

Like most people, witches celebrate this holiday at night. It just seems fitting to commemorate a holiday about the dead when it is dark. Although the witches' New Year is a sedate holiday, witches also attend Halloween parties, but not on the night of October 31. That night is reserved for more solemn pursuits.

Yule (December 21): Winter Solstice

Many of the traditions that people observe at Christmas have their roots in *Yule* and other pre-Christian seasonal celebrations. The ancient Romans decorated their homes with the boughs of green trees. The Druids also honored trees and collected and hung mistletoe. So if you celebrated Christmas in the past, you can probably hang on to some of your traditions.

def•i•ni•tion

In common usage, the English word **Yule** has come to mean "Christmas" or "the season of Christmas." The word comes from an Old English word that referred to a 12-day Pagan feast. Those old-time Pagans sure knew how to celebrate!

Yule (pronounced *YOOL*), one of the Lesser Sabbats, marks the Winter Solstice, the longest night of the year. It is also seen as the time when the God is reborn and light begins to return to the earth. Wiccans celebrate by exchanging gifts, decorating a tree, hanging holly and mistletoe, singing, feasting, and by burning a Yule log. The exchange of gifts symbolizes hope for the future and the gift that the Lady has bestowed upon the earth by giving birth to the Lord, who is also the Sun.

The Yule log is burned in the evening in a fireplace or a cauldron. It symbolizes the Lord reborn and the return of the Sun. Every year, some of the log is saved and is used the following year to light that year's Yule log. In this way, the fire of the Yule log is symbolically reborn as well.

Imbolc (February 2): Rebirth of the Sun

Imbolc (pronounced *IM-bolk*), which is also called Candlemas, is the time when Wiccans celebrate the renewing fertility of the earth. The Goddess is seen as recovering from childbirth, and the God is a small child. There is the feeling that spring is coming, but a certain restlessness or cabin fever can set in. This can also be the bleakest time of the year when we start to fear that spring will never arrive. Many people celebrate Groundhog Day on this date. And what is Groundhog Day but a way to let Nature reassure us that spring really will come? Sometimes, even though it is still cold, you can see early buds on trees on this date. This is another way that Nature reminds us to hang on; life is getting ready to burst forth.

Imbolc, a Greater Sabbat, is a time to celebrate with seeds, or with a newly germinating idea. Some covens like to initiate new members at this time of year. Imbolc is a holiday of purification and of the renewed fertility of the earth. It's a great time for some early spring-cleaning, too. Get rid of things you don't need. Get ready for the spring season to come.

Ostara (March 21): The Spring Equinox

Many of the symbols of Ostara (pronounced *oh-STAR-ah*) are also common to Easter. Eggs have been a symbol of renewed life and fertility since the time of the ancient Egyptians and Persians. In fact, in both cultures people dyed eggs and ate them in honor of the returning spring. The Egyptians also saw hares, or rabbits, which were associated with the Moon, as symbols of fertility and rebirth.

In the Wiccan tradition, the Lord and Lady are seen as young and innocent at this time of the year. The day and night are of equal duration at the spring or vernal equinox. In the days that follow, the hours of light grow longer, spring blooms in the air, and the Lord and Lady, as do all the creatures of Nature, begin to wonder about one another.

A Wiccan celebration of Ostara, a Lesser Sabbat, includes boiled and decorated eggs. Some Wiccans even do egg hunts and eat chocolate bunnies. If you can celebrate at the exact moment of the vernal equinox, you can even balance a raw egg on one end because of the change in the earth's tilt. In ritual, witches might bless seeds for future planting. This is also a good time of year to buy a new ritual broom for sweeping out negative energies.

Webweaving

Ostara (or Eostra) is the Teutonic Goddess of spring and fertility. The Christian holiday Easter gets its name from this Goddess. And her name in turn comes from the Indo-European root that means "to shine." Some people believe that the Goddess Astarte's name comes from this same root as well.

Beltane (April 30): Handfasting of the Lord and Lady

At Beltane (pronounced *BEL-tayne*), one of the Greater Sabbats, the Lord has reached manhood, and he and the Lady unite in a *handfasting*. In this act they help the earth to burst forth with life and new growth. To celebrate Beltane, Wiccans dance around the maypole, which is a phallic symbol that represents the Lord. Some Wiccans focus on the cauldron, the symbol of the Lady who becomes pregnant at Beltane. Celebrants wear flowers in their hair or wreaths of green foliage. This is also a great day for spring-cleaning and for bringing flowers into the house so everything feels bright and new and fresh.

def•i•ni•tion

A **handfasting** is a Wiccan marriage ceremony in which a couple (a man and a woman, two men, or two women) is joined together for as long as their love shall last. If they decide that they no longer love each other, they can part.

Banish!

Avoid accidents involving fire. Even if people have done it throughout history, it is not a good idea to jump over a fire. When working with fire, make sure that your clothing is not highly flammable. (Synthetic materials burn very fast.) Have a bucket of water and some sand on hand in case you need to douse the flames in a hurry. In short, be careful, and don't become a burning witch!

Summer Solstice (June 21): A Midsummer Dream

The Summer Solstice, a Lesser Sabbat (also known as Litha, pronounced *LEE-tha*), marks the longest day of the year. The Lord and the Lady are at their peak, and all is green and growing. Wiccans give reverence at this time, but don't usually hold large celebrations. In the past, this Sabbat was celebrated with large bonfires. People were even said to jump over the fires to promote purification, fertility, and love within themselves. The fire, of course, also represents the Sun at the height of his powers. (Be aware that bonfires are illegal in many localities, and they certainly are potentially dangerous—to property and to all life.)

While this can be a joyous holiday, celebrating the triumph of the Sun, it is also tinged with sadness; after the longest day of the year, the days will grow shorter and shorter. Midsummer Night's Eve has traditionally been a great day to perform love and healing magick. It's also a good time to communicate with fairies and forest sprites.

Lughnassad (August 2): The Early Harvest

Lughnassad (pronounced *LOO-nus-uh*) is one of the Greater Sabbats and marks the beginning of the fall harvest, the day on which the first grain is cut. Lughnassad gets its name from the multitalented Celtic God Lugh, who, in addition to being king of the Gods, is associated with the Sun, magick, art, strength, courage, and music. Some witches in the Reclaiming tradition celebrate this Sabbat on the beach and build a sand sculpture of the moribund God to honor and mourn him.

As fall approaches and the hours of sunlight begin to shrink, the God also starts to lose his strength. But the Goddess is already pregnant with the God, who will be reborn again at Yule.

Lughnassad is also called the Feast of Bread or Lammas, which means loaf mass. Wiccans often bake and hold feasts on this holiday to celebrate the plenty at this time of year. You can decorate your house for the holiday with a wreath and place fruits and vegetables on your altar while you do ritual.

Mabon (September 21): Harvest Festival

Mabon (pronounced *MAY-bon*), one of the Lesser Sabbats, is the second harvest festival and is held on the Autumn Equinox to celebrate the last fruits of the year. Some people call this holiday Harvest Home. Night and day are of equal duration on this date, and you can feel the approach of winter and darkness. The Lord is preparing for his death at Samhain, and the Lady is beginning to mourn his loss.

Rituals to honor this Sabbat include late-season vegetables such as squash, nuts, sheaves of late wheat, and ears of corn. A cornucopia, a symbol of prosperity and plenty, is a nice addition to your altar at this time. Some witches like to hold feasts or do food magick on this holiday.

The Least You Need to Know

- Wiccans celebrate eight Sabbats.
- The Sabbats occur at the time of natural events associated with the change of the seasons.
- Celebrating the Sabbats helps keep you in tune with the natural energies of the earth and her seasons.

- While both the Lord and Lady can be honored at these holidays, the Sabbats follow the life cycle of the Lord.
- Celebrating alone with the Lord and the Lady, with a small group of friends, or with a coven can all be profound experiences. And the Sabbats can be fun, too.

Chapter 15

Summon, Stir, or Call

In This Chapter

- How to ask various entities to ritual
- Bringing in the big guns
- From the Realm of Fairy
- From the Realm of Spirit

We've talked about the various pantheons of Gods and Goddesses that you can work with in the Wiccan religion. You can also work with a number of other entities. Some of them you've probably heard of. Others will be less familiar, and still others you will be meeting for the first time.

When you work with these entities and with deity, it's important to show the proper respect. Treat them as honored guests in your home. These beings are very old and very wise, but their intelligence is quite different from human intelligence. So don't expect them to act the way a person does. You must be very specific and clear about what you ask them to do and you must do your asking with respect.

Summon, Stir, Call, Request, or Invite—Which Is Right?

In Chapter 7, we discussed ritual etiquette—how to behave toward fellow celebrants during a ritual. You also want to give the proper respect to the entities from other realms at your ritual. One way to show that respect is in how you ask them to attend.

You can *summon* certain entities—the four Elements, fairies, and the Elementals, for example. Other larger, more powerful entities are stirred. You *stir* them because they are sleeping and need to be awakened before they can attend your ritual. If you want the God and Goddess to attend your ritual, you *call* them respectfully, and they will come. When you *invite* entities to your ritual, you ask them to be present, but not to join you inside the circle. You can *request* the presence of any of the four winds and of your spirit guides. You also need to tell the entities you have asked to ritual what you want them to do. You can ask them to protect you, observe, or help you carry out your magick.

def•i•ni•tion

Summon, stir, call, invite, and request all mean close to the same thing, but these terms are not all the same in magick. You **summon** the entities that are close by and all around you, such as the Elements and the Elementals. **Stirring** implies a higher level of respect and is used for larger, more powerful beings—the Ancestors, Dragons, and Watchtowers. You **call** to angels and to the Lord and Lady. You **invite** your familiar to join you in ritual (although you probably won't need to ask). Finally, you **request** the presence of the winds and of your spirit guides.

Here's an invocation named "Summon, Stir, and Call" that Denise uses when she calls in the quarters in ritual:

I call to the Lord and Lady fair
I summon to us the Element of Air
I stir the Ancients with knowledge of old
Be here this night our spirits you hold.

Lord and Lady protect us, keep us from harm
Air empower us with communication and charm
Ancient Ones give us knowledge that lasts
Provide us this in the circle that's cast.

I call the Lord and Lady with loving desire
I summon to me the Element of Fire
I stir the Ancients, the old ones, the wise
To comfort our fears, our yearning, our cries.

Lord and Lady protect us with your strength of healing
Fire empower us with passionate feeling
Ancient Ones give us understandings that last
Provide us this in the circle that's cast.

I call the Lord and Lady to hear your sons and daughters
I summon to me the Element of Water
I stir the Ancients with truth from the past
Be here this night, be here at last.

Lord and Lady protect us, keep us close to your side
Water empower us with emotions of pride
Ancient Ones give us patience that lasts
Be here this night in the circle that's cast.

I call the Lord and Lady who gave us birth
I summon to me the Element of Earth
I stir the Ancients to be here this night
To travel upon their spiritual light.

Lord and Lady protect us, surround us with love
Earth empower us as below so above
Ancient Ones give us wisdom that lasts
Provide us this in the circle that's cast.

Notice that this invocation calls the Lord and Lady, summons the Elements, and stirs the Ancients, or Ancestors. In addition, the invocation spells out what each entity should do.

The Elements: Air, Fire, Water, and Earth

Names: Air, Fire, Water, and Earth

Where from: Elemental Realm

How to invite them to ritual: Summon

You can summon the Elements to attend your ritual. Many witches call them in when they call in the quarters. Ask the Elements to stand outside your magick circle and guard it, or just have them witness your ritual and any magick that you do. Depending on the magick that you are doing, you might want to call upon one particular Element. For example, if you were working magick to help you communicate or refine your ideas, you'd want to summon Air to your ritual and draw on Air's mental and intellectual energy.

Dragons

Types: Air Dragon, Fire Dragon, Water Dragon, Earth Dragon, and Spirit Dragon

Where from: Elemental Realm

How to invite them to ritual: Stir gently

There is some disagreement among witches about the nature and characteristics of Dragons. Some see them as noble beasts. Other witches, Denise included, see them as the awesome powers of the Elements. Either way, you never want to make a Dragon angry.

Webweaving

You might see the Air Dragon referred to as the Dragon of the Element of the East; the Fire Dragon referred to as the Dragon of the Element of the South; the Water Dragon referred to as the Dragon of the Element of the West; and Earth Dragon referred to as the Dragon of the Element of the North. The Spirit Dragon is referred to as the Dragon of the Element of Akasha.

The Earth Dragon possesses all the strength of the earth itself. If it is provoked to anger, it will cause earthquakes and geological plate shifts. The Water Dragon wields all the power of the ocean—a tidal wave that could sweep away a city in an instant. The Dragon of the Air commands forces equal to the jet stream and those of a devastating tornado, while the Fire Dragon represents lava and the molten core of the earth. The Spirit Dragon is the essence of the God and Goddess, the spirituality of everything on Earth.

Dragons have minds of their own and can be unpredictable. If you have any doubt in your own ability to focus your energy or intent, then we would not recommend you deal with Dragon energy. Better to wait until you become more adept.

For special occasions such as a Wiccaning, a handfasting, or an initiation, you would stir the Dragons. You also might invite them to attend ritual if your group, community, or coven were facing a major issue that affected everyone. You probably should

invite the Dragons only under unusual circumstances. They are very powerful and are not for everyday situations. Whatever you do, treat them with tremendous respect.

The Guardians of the Watchtowers

Names: Guardian of the Watchtower of Air, Guardian of the Watchtower of Fire, Guardian of the Watchtower of Water, Guardian of the Watchtower of Earth

Where from: Elemental Realm

How to invite to ritual: Stir gently

The Guardians of the Watchtowers are the guardians of the Elemental forces of each direction. Because they guard entities of such enormous force, they themselves possess tremendous power. Some witches are afraid of them and won't use them in ritual. They are to be invited only when what you are doing is important. You can have them observe, guard, or protect you during ritual.

You may ask them to watch and protect your circle during an initiation. Or you may ask them to witness the rite of an initiation ceremony. Having the Watchtowers witness an initiation can be a distinct advantage for the initiate. If they have witnessed your initiation, then they'll recognize your name, protect and watch over you, and be aware of who you are if you ever need them to guard your circle. You also might invite the Watchtowers to a Wiccaning or handfasting, or if strife or some major conflict is occurring in your community. In addition, you could ask them to deliver your magick in cases of life or death—if, for instance, someone were very ill and you needed your healing magick taken to that person. The Watchtowers should be stirred only for important workings. You'll find an invocation you can use to stir the Watchtowers in Chapter 24.

Banish!

Resist the temptation to call in the big guys—the Dragons and the Watchtowers—just because you can. You want to use these superpowerful forces for important work when you really need them. If you call in Dragons when you're doing magick to keep yourself from breaking your fingernails, then who are you going to call if a tornado threatens your house?

Winds

Names: East Wind, Wind of the East, or Eurus; South Wind, Wind of the South, or Notus; West Wind, Wind of the West, or Zephyrus; North Wind, Wind of the North, or Boreas

Where from: Elemental Realm

How to invite them to ritual: Request their presence politely

The winds are great for taking your magick and delivering it quickly and forcefully. When you ask the winds to carry your magick for you, you are doing Air magick. Keep in mind that each wind has its own Elemental correspondence. The South Wind is associated with the Element of Fire. So if you were sending out a love spell, the South Wind would be a good choice for its delivery. You would call upon the North Wind for its Earthy aspects, upon the West Wind for its Watery qualities, and upon the East Wind for its Air associations.

A Little Help from Your Friends

You can have friends in the Realm of Fairy, but you need to be careful with them. Be really sure that you want them in your life before you ask them to help you.

Fairies

Names: Flower fairies, mermaids, mermen, little people, sprites, and pixies

Where from: Realm of Fairy

How to invite them to ritual: Summon

Webweaving

Fairies do not like to be constantly thanked. They expect payment for their services. If they have helped you, leave a bowl of sweetened milk out for them or give them silver coins and shiny trinkets, and save your pretty words.

You're probably familiar with the concept of fairies. You may think of them as cute little creatures. Well, fairies come in all shapes and sizes. They can be big as well as small. They can take a variety of different forms, too. They can appear as miniature humans, or they can take the form of an elf. If they want, they can change their shapes to match their environment.

You can summon fairies to ritual, but as a novice it's not a good idea to invite them into your magick circle. If you do, they might cause mischief with the energy you have raised. The best times to contact fairies are at dawn, dusk, noon, and midnight, and on the Equinoxes and Solstices. You'll know that the fairies have arrived when the flames of your candles start to dance around. Sometimes you can even feel a crawling sensation on your skin as if bugs were walking on you.

Fairies are skilled in the healing arts, metalworking, and all artistic pursuits. If you have called fairies into your home, they will guard the house and make sure that nothing goes wrong. Be forewarned, however. They also are extremely mischievous. They will borrow and hide your earrings. Or they will make your keys disappear just as you are about to leave the house. In addition, keep in mind that once you have invited fairies into your house, they're really hard to get rid of. So make sure you really want their help before you ask for them. They may stick around and mess with your stuff for a long, long time.

So Mote It Be

To discourage fairies from taking up permanent residence in your home, hang iron pots around the house. Because iron renders fairies powerless and incapable of magick, they will flee from this metal and leave you in peace. You can even paint an iron pot and hang it as a "decoration" on your front door. Now, are you sure that it's fairies that keep causing your wallet and sunglasses to vanish?

The Elementals

Names: Sylphs, salamanders, undines, and gnomes

Where from: Realm of Fairy

How to invite them to ritual: Summon

You can summon the Elementals to your ritual, but you don't want to invite them into your magick circle. You can have them guard your circle, observe, or carry your magick to the place it needs to go. Some people believe that we each have a sylph, salamander, undine, and gnome assigned to watch over us from birth. Elementals have a very basic mentality and are not compassionate little creatures. Just like fairies, they don't like to be thanked and will get irritated if you do so. Instead of thanks, you should leave them gifts of milk, honey, coins, or small shiny objects.

Sylphs are a force of Air, from gentle breezes to gusts of wind to tornadoes, and in fact, they help to make Air. They are also associated with our thoughts and mental development, and they help us breathe and metabolize air properly. The king of the sylphs is called Paralda. You might want to summon him, or his subjects, to help give you inspiration, heighten your intuition, or digest a lot of information. Sylphs can spur and activate your imagination and can also carry a message from you to another person's sylph.

Salamanders inhabit any place where there is Fire—from the molten core of the earth, to a candle, to the Sun. They also are associated with our fiery aspects. They are great to summon if you need to work with issues of sexuality or love, and will help

you build up your passion, vitality, enthusiasm, and spirituality. Their king is named Djinn, and they influence our emotions, metabolism, and sense of idealism. Their energy is one of transformation; they destroy and then rebuild. They also can help to heal and detoxify the body. Salamanders, because of their great energy, can be difficult to control.

def•i•ni•tion

Sylphs are the Elementals of Air. **Salamanders** are the Elementals of Fire, while **undines** are the Elementals of Water. And **gnomes** are the Elementals of Earth.

Undines exist in any place where there is Water—from the depths of the oceans to rivers to drops of rain. They are also associated with our watery, or emotional, aspects. You might want to call them if you were dealing with healing, purification, creativity, or emotional issues. They usually take a female form, and their queen is called Niksa. They influence our dreams, creative expression, and artistic performance. They can help to awaken our empathy, imagination, and intuition. They also help to regulate the water balance in the body.

Gnomes are of the earth. They maintain geological structures and are associated with our Earthy nature—sensations and fertility. You might call gnomes to help you work with issues involving growth, nurturing, abundance, fertility, or prosperity. Gnomes and their king, who is called Ghob, guard the treasures of the earth and can help you to find such treasures. They give each rock and crystal its own unique energy and are skilled craftspeople. They can lend us endurance and persistence.

Tree Spirits

Names: Tree spirits

Where from: Realm of Fairy

How to invite them to ritual: Summon

Each tree spirit has its own personality, depending on the kind of tree. You might want to work with the spirit of a willow tree to learn to become more bending, forgiving, and adaptable. You'd go to an oak for strength, wisdom, and steadfastness. And a redwood could help you with longevity, wisdom, and issues of aging.

In the Company of ...

The Lord and the Lady are all around us all the time. So, too, are all the many varieties of angels. The Ancestors ... well, they dwell in the Realm of Spirit, too, but they are sleeping.

Deities

Names: The Lord and Lady, the God and Goddess, the All, and many others

Where from: Realm of Spirit

How to invite them to ritual: Call

As we discussed in Chapter 4, there are many, many different names and aspects of the All. You can think of the All as the Lord and Lady, the God and Goddess, Zeus and Hera, Shiva and Kali, or Freyja and Thor. You'll want to be quite familiar with a given aspect of deity before you invite it to your ritual. You can call the Lord and Lady to ritual and ask them to protect, guide, or support you. They will help you carry out your magick, if it is positive. They will also heal, nurture, and love you.

Webweaving

The suffix *-el* in the names of the archangels—Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael—means "of God" in Hebrew. The English word *angel* is also derived from Hebrew. It comes from a Hebrew word meaning "messenger."

Angels

Names: Many and various (see the following list)

Where from: Realm of Spirit

How to invite them to ritual: Call

There are three different levels of angels:

- **Level 1.** Seraphim—angels of pure love and thought; cherubim—spirits of harmony and the wisdom of the All; thrones—spirits of will and justice
- **Level 2.** Dominions—angels of wisdom and intuition; virtues—angels of choice and movement; powers—angels of form and space
- **Level 3.** Principalities—angels of personality and time; archangels—Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael; angel messengers; guardian angels

So Mote It Be

You can get to know your guardian angel better through meditation. Sit quietly for a few minutes with your eyes closed, then ask your guardian angel to come to you. Stay very still and listen to the sound of your own breathing. You'll probably have to try this a few times before you get a sense of your angel's presence.

You probably don't want to deal directly with the highest level of angels. They are very intense and can be rather frightening. The guardian angels and the archangels are more accessible.

You can ask angels to help or enhance your magick or to carry it to the Lord and Lady. Angels can also help your magick to manifest. They are great to work with on spiritual issues and health matters. They can help to heal you from physical and psychological pain. You might call them if you've been hurt in a love relationship or if your child has died. They will also protect you any time you need them. But don't call on angels for day-to-day matters such as money issues or doing magick to get a job. Angels prefer to deal with the spiritual plane.

Ancestors

Names: Various

Where from: Realm of Spirit

How to invite them to ritual: Stir

The Ancestors are figures from the past who held great wisdom and knowledge. You don't have to be related to such a person to consider him or her an Ancestor. Many witches consider historical figures who were well versed in the magickal arts—Merlin, Aradia, some of the ancient kings and queens of Egypt, Socrates, or Pythagoras, for example—to be Ancestors. If your own relatives were particularly wise, you could look to them as your magickal Ancestors. You might want to do some research into your own ancestry. Who knows, you could be related to a famous witch! If you have a deceased grandmother or other relative who has passed on who possessed unusual knowledge, insight, and the wisdom of an old reincarnated soul, and whose decisions you respected, you could consider her an Ancestor. But remember, just because someone is dead does not automatically make that person wise. You can stir the Ancestors and ask them to attend your ritual to aid your creativity and wisdom. They will give you good guidance and help you make decisions.

Tapping into the Power of ...

We are still in the Realm of the Spirit. Now you are going to meet some more allies who can help you—spirit guides, spirit animals, and familiars. Does any of this sound familiar to you?

Spirit Guides

Names: Varies from individual to individual

Where from: Realm of Spirit

How to invite them to ritual: Request their presence

Like guardian angels, spirit guides are assigned to us at birth, and we can have as many as seven of them. Sometimes a spirit guide is a soul who doesn't need to incarnate again. Your spirit guides help you to learn your spiritual lesson. They also watch over you and often will quite literally guide you on your path through life. In addition, your spirit guides will sometimes set up learning situations to help you evolve spiritually. Often spirit guides come to us in our dreams.

When you do ritual, you'll want to invite your spirit guides to come into the circle with you. Actually, you probably won't need to ask—they will already be there with you. You can ask them for the same kind of help you would ask from deity—to help carry out your magick, and to protect, guide, and support you. The more you work with spirit guides, the more aware you will become of their presence. Some people can feel them. Others smell them. Sometimes you can catch a glimpse of them out of the corner of your eye. If you meditate regularly, you may start being able to see them. They usually present themselves in a form that is comfortable for you. Some people's spirit guides appear in the form of an animal. They can even look like big human babies.

Spirit Animals

Names: The various species of animals

Where from: Realm of Spirit

How to invite them to ritual: Summon

A spirit animal represents the spirit of a particular species of animal, not of an individual animal, such as your dog who died when you were 11. Spirit animals possess all the knowledge and habits of their species. Many people have one particular spirit

animal—a wolf, raven, otter, or bear, for instance. They feel that this spirit animal represents them, and they will ask the animal for help.

Even if you are not in touch with your own spirit animal, you can ask one to help you. You can ask spirit animals to carry messages or magick to their destinations. When you ask a spirit animal to take something somewhere for you, keep in mind that it will perform this action in the manner characteristic of its species.

If You Want Your Message Delivered with ...	Pick This Spirit Animal
Aggression	Badger
Beauty	Cardinal, deer
Bravery	Elk
Caution	Porcupine
Creativity	Spider
Cunning	Fox, coyote
Docility	Cow
Faithfulness	Dog
Feminine energies	Moose
Fertility	Stork, bee
Friendship	Butterfly
Grace	Flamingo
Helpful energy	Donkey
Humor	Dolphin
Independence	Cat
Intelligence	Pig
Joy	Canary, hummingbird
Loyalty	Dog
Magick	Cat
Optimism	Chickadee
Patience	Donkey
Playfulness	Otter
Protective or defensive energy	Armadillo, porcupine, skunk, meadowlark
Resourcefulness	Squirrel, beaver, woodpecker
Sexual energy	Bull

If You Want Your Message Delivered with ...	Pick This Spirit Animal
Strength	Bear
Swiftness	Rabbit
Wisdom	Lizard

Familiars

Names: Various

Where from: Realm of Spirit

How to invite them to ritual: Invite

Familiars are individual animals (not whole species of animals) that are inhabited by spirit. Familiars work with witches to help with their magick. Typically a familiar seeks you out, and not the other way around. Familiars have more dignity than regular pets because they are able to communicate with you telepathically, and they tend to be drawn to ritual , so you usually don't have to ask them to attend. Familiars can enter and exit your magick circle at will. You don't need to cut a door in the circle for them to go in or out.

While you are doing ritual, your familiar will give you confidence. It will warn you if you have made a mistake or if you are about to have an accident with a candle. The presence of a familiar will also enhance your magick.

Webweaving

In the 1600s in England, many women accused of witchcraft were convicted because their judges found "witches' teats" on their bodies. A witch's teat was a small protuberance, such as a large mole, from which the witch's familiar was imagined to suck her blood. Now that sounds like one demanding animal!

The Least You Need to Know

- When you ask the various entities to come to ritual, you can summon, stir, call, or invite them, or you can request their presence. Show your respect when you issue your invitation by asking them in the proper way.
- The Elements, Dragons, Watchtowers, and winds are all large and awesome powers from the Elemental Realm. Many witches call upon the Elements when

they practice ritual. You want to invoke the Dragons and the Watchtowers only for special occasions and in cases of real need.

- Fairies and Elementals inhabit the Realm of Fairy. They will help you with your magick, but you must be careful with them. As a beginner, you should not invite them into your magick circle because they can be very mischievous and might mess with your magick.
- Deities, angels, Ancestors, spirit guides, spirit animals, and familiars are from the Realm of Spirit. All of them will help you—some without you even asking.

Chapter 16

Why Do Magick?

In This Chapter

- But what is magick, really?
- Before you do magick
- The actual act of doing magick
- Different kinds of magick

Magick is something that people have done for thousands of years. But in modern times, most of us have been taught that magick is evil, so we have suppressed our magickal abilities. Adding the element of magick to your life can make you feel whole and complete. Doing magick can help raise your consciousness and bring you luck. Through magick, you will have new experiences, and you may even have your fantasies come true!

Magick is empowering, and it's also fun and interesting. It can help you heal or can smooth out a bumpy life path. It can help you control bad habits, build your self-esteem, give you peace of mind, and help you achieve your goals. So why *not* do magick?

Are You Ready for Magick?

Are you ready to change your life and yourself? Have you thought about what your needs and wants are? Do you know the difference between needs and wants? Are you ready to control your life and take responsibility for your actions? If you answered yes to these questions, then answer this next set. Have you tried other methods to achieve your goal? Have you really considered all the implications of using magick in this case? Are you sure that your magickal action will not cause harm to others? If you can answer yes to all of these questions, you are ready to work magick!

What Is Magick?

Magick is the direction and application of energy using psychic forces in order to create change for a specific, desired outcome. Magick is also a system of symbols, which are programmed in your mind, that help you achieve your magickal goal. As such, it is a form of mental training through which you can alter a situation by using your will. Magick can also take the form of change and growth within yourself. In this respect, you change how you look at things or how you feel about a given situation. Magick can be a wonderful addition to your life. Or you can manipulate magickal energy to negative, destructive ends. It's your choice.

Magick, Magic, and Prayer

Magick with a *k* is what witches do. Witches use the Elements—Air, Fire, Water, and Earth—and other forces of Nature, along with their will and their good intentions, to create change. This kind of magick can be slow, but sometimes you can see the results in a day or two.

Magic without a *k* is what performers do on stage. A magic act is a theatrical production of illusions where stage magicians make you see something that does not really exist. They trick you with their tricks. Because this type of magic does not create real change and is only illusion, its effects are immediate.

If you ask for something in prayer, it is not the same as doing magick. Prayer is a form of communication with deity. Sometimes it is nice just to have a little chat! During prayer, you get closer to deity, feel the love the Lord and Lady have to offer, and connect in your spirit. In prayer you can ask for something, but that is not magick. In magick, you put forth effort by using your energy to get what you need. In this way, you work along with deity instead of just asking from them.

So Mote It Be

Because your own energies and the outside energies you pull in are what you use to do your magick, you want to learn to focus. One way to practice this is to meditate for 10 minutes a day. Turn off the phone. Sit comfortably in a chair with your feet on the floor and your spine erect. Close your eyes and listen to your breath as it moves in and out. If you find yourself distracted by a thought, bring your attention back to your breath. At first, you probably won't notice much, but after practice (and daily practice is best) you'll probably start to feel that your sessions leave you refreshed and less distracted.

Where Magick Starts

Magick starts within you. Once you begin to recognize your magickal potential, things will start happening for you. Magick allows you to open up to new ideas and experiences. It can help you know yourself, and that in turn can help you relate to other people and situations. Because magick comes from *your* energy (in addition to outside energies that you control), the magick starts with you. Once the change of recognizing your magickal potential has happened inside you, the rest will start to fall into place naturally.

How Magick Works

Here are four basic laws of magick. Spending time thinking about each one will help you become aware that there is magick all around you and that you are connected to that magick:

1. **The universe abounds with energy.** As you may remember from your high school physics class, everything is energy. Objects that appear to be solid are actually mostly empty space. They consist of tiny subatomic particles bound by pure energy. According to the brilliant theoretical physicist Albert Einstein, even the particles themselves can be seen as energy. A rock is energy. Water is energy. Wood is energy. The various tissues of your body are energy. Energy is all around us all the time. You can use this energy any time you want.
2. **Everything is connected to everything else.** Remember the metaphor of throwing a stone into a pond and watching the ripples move away from the spot where the stone has splashed down? The ripples move out in concentric rings, just as the repercussions of your actions do. If you actually do toss a stone into

a pool of water, you see these ripples form because all the water molecules in the pool are connected. If you move one, or in this case a few, you move them all. In esoteric teachings, you're taught to see the universe as a network of fine threads called Indra's Web. The web connects us all to one another and connects each individual to all things. Besides connecting us to physical, material things, the web also connects us to the higher realm, to spirit. As the witches say, "As above, so below." In other words, a movement in the heavens will cause a corresponding movement down here on Earth.

3. **There are an infinite number of possibilities.** Have you ever looked at the stars on a clear night and seen them go on and on and on? (If you haven't done this recently, try it!) Just as there are an infinite number of stars, there are an infinite number of events that might occur. Your possibilities really are limitless.
4. **The path is within you.** To do magick, you have to tap into your subconscious mind. With your conscious mind you decide what kind of magick you are going to do and what you need to do it. Once you have begun the actual act of magick, you communicate your purpose to your subconscious. Your subconscious increases the energy that you raise and sends it to your higher self, your superconscious, and to spirit. At that point, the energy is ready to create the desired result.

In other words, when doing an act of magick, you use the connectedness of all things plus part of the huge supply of naturally occurring energy to turn possibility into reality by following the path within.

def•i•ni•tion

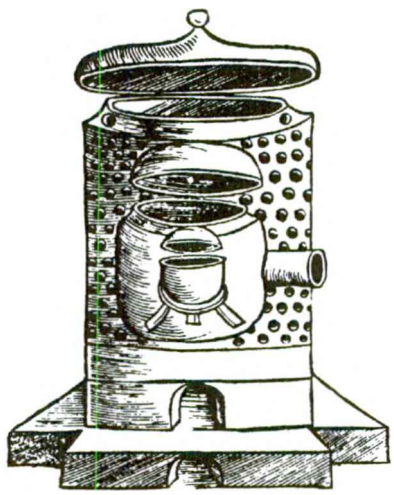
Alchemy is a traditional practice in which the alchemist mixed various materials to try to make a Philosopher's Stone. The stone was said to turn base metals, such as lead or copper, into gold or silver, and to act as a panacea—the cure for all aliments—and prolong life. The word *alchemy* comes from a Late Greek term that means the "art of transmutation practiced by the Egyptians."

Magickians and Witches: Highs and Lows

Ceremonial magickians practice high magick, while witches do low magick. The magick of the high, or ceremonial, magickian is complex and time consuming. High magick involves long rituals for the sole purpose of doing magick and not for religious or spiritual reasons. High magickians use many different tools in their magick and have to memorize large amounts of material. Many of them wear expensive, ornate costumes when they work.

Throughout history, *alchemists*, a type of high magickian, studied chemical reactions and processes in hopes of finding the key to transform ordinary metals into precious ones. While they worked, they

often exposed themselves to toxic substances and frequently suffered symptoms of poisoning. Alchemists not only sought to change material reality, but strove to transform their own souls through knowledge.



A Renaissance depiction of the alchemist's oven (1529).

Sometimes high magickians will conjure up other entities to work their magick for them. Witches don't usually do this; they tend to direct their own energy toward their goals. Because it is formal, high magick can take many years to learn. Though it may seem cumbersome, there is a lot of power in ceremonial magick. If you are really interested in magick, you may want to do some research on high magick. You can learn a lot about magickal energy by reading about the rituals and ceremonies of the New Reformed Orthodox Order of the Golden Dawn, the Egyptian, and Druid traditions—just three examples of viable high-magick practices.

In contrast, low magick consists of taking your raw energy and emotion and channeling them toward a goal. While engaged in an act of magick, a witch chants, sings, dances, says spells, and plays drums to build up internal energy. Once the energy has been built up, the witch releases the energy to affect change. Low magick is a fairly simple type of magick, but it is extremely effective. Even though most witches practice low magick, there are witches who work high magick.

Low magick is more accessible than high magick. In fact, most of us probably do low magick on a daily basis without even realizing it! With the proper training, anyone can practice either form of magick. Although many witches are Wiccan, you don't have to be of any particular religion to do magick.

Magickal Ethics

Remember the law of threefold return? Whatever you do will come back to you three times. Keep this law in mind when you are contemplating doing magick, and do no harm. If you do, you will get three times as much harm coming back at you. Ouch!

When the mundane way of handling an issue fails, then magick may be the answer. Witches should never attack, but they can use their magick to defend themselves. There is nothing wrong with sending all the negativity being thrown your way back at the person from whom it came. That energy will work like a karmic wake-up smack. Always place a shield of protection around yourself if you choose to do this. This way if this person in question doesn't learn from his or her mistakes, the negative energy will continue to bounce off you and go right back to him or her.

If you are thinking of doing magick for someone else, stop and get that person's permission first. Even if the magick is completely for that person's benefit, you should have that person's permission before you act. Why? Because your magick will affect change in someone else's life. If you do this without a person's permission, you could be impinging on that person's free will. Maybe deep down your friend, who always gripes that she can't stop smoking, really likes having this insoluble problem to complain about! If she asks for your help, go for it; but without her permission, any magick for her benefit is a no-go.

You also have to use some common sense when it comes to magick. If you know someone is ill and you know that he or she doesn't want to be, then by all means use your magick to help encourage healing for that person. You would certainly pray for the person to get better, and as magick, like prayer, is directed energy, why not use it to promote health and well being?

What about love spells? (We knew you were going to ask about that!) Again, any magick that involves another person must not in any way manipulate that person's free will. So you can't make the amazingly cute guy (or girl) you see on the bus every day fall in love with you. But here is what you *can* do—you can do a love spell to increase your own powers of attraction. You can also do a spell to attract the person who is right for you without focusing on any particular individual. Who knows? That spell might just cause you to attract the attention of your object of affection. Or you might attract someone even better!

Parents, in their roles as caretakers, can do spells for their young children. But once children are old enough to make their own decisions, parents should ask their children if it is okay first. You want to do a spell for your sister's baby who is in the hospital? Ask your sister first! If she does not agree for whatever reasons, don't do it.

Working With Magickal Energy

Magickal energy is real, and it is powerful. You need to respect it. Before you do magick, you need to try to resolve whatever the problem is by mundane means. If all else has failed, only then should you turn to magick. You also need to know your intent—are you 100 percent clear on what you want? Are you really sure that you want it? Is getting what you want going to hurt anyone?

Working with magickal energy requires time, patience, and planning. No witch just wiggles his or her nose and achieves a goal. Because magick works with natural energies, you want to select a good time to do the particular type of magick that you are planning. You want to be sure that the Moon is in a phase conducive to your plans. You may also want to check an almanac or witches' calendar for any significant planetary movements. (See Chapter 20 for more information about the planets and planning your magick.) You also need to be aware of the advantages of working magick at different times of the day or night. (For information on this topic, see Chapter 21.) Of course, in an emergency a witch has to do what a witch has to do. So cast that spell! Denise has found, when the need is great, that some of her best magick has been created on the spur of the moment.

You shouldn't do magick when you aren't feeling well. Remember, magick comes from within you. It is your energies that are going to be put out there. So don't wipe yourself out! Wait till you're over that icky cold before you cast your great new spell.

Banish!

Resist the temptation to do magick when you are angry. After you have calmed down and had a chance to think, you may feel differently. If you've already done some magick, you can't take it back without a lot of work, and maybe even then your spell will cause the change you'd asked for anyhow. Spells, unlike computers, don't come with "undo" keys. And remember, what you send out comes back to you three times.

Before the Magick

The witches' pyramid is a kind of magickal check list that some witches use before they do magick. It describes a few conditions you may want to meet prior to performing magick. You must be ready to ...

1. Know who you are and what you are. You have to *know* the rules. You must *know* what magickal rites you are going to be doing. And you must *know* your intention.
2. Dare to do what you are planning. Do you *dare* to follow through?
3. Will the magick to happen. Do you have the ability and the *will* to follow through? Can you *will* your energy to make it happen?
4. Keep silent and not brag or boast about what you have done. You don't take your magick for granted, but you sit back quietly, watch, and know that you are growing.

The idea of the witches' pyramid—to know, to dare, to will, to keep silent—is used by many witches as a way to direct, assess, and redirect their magickal practice. It's a handy tool you can use to check your development. By reviewing the four steps of the witches' pyramid, you can see if you are following its good advice. You can also see how well you are meeting your magickal goals.

The Magick Circle Revisited

As you learned in Chapter 11, you work in a magick circle when you are doing magick. You can think of it as your magickal office or workshop. Inside your circle, you are protected from any negative energy. The circle will also keep any outside entities from changing your magick. The circle holds the energy that you have raised until you are ready to release it.

Your magick circle is not just a two-dimensional area described by a line on the floor. Your circle goes through the floor. Using the powers of your mind and creative visualization, you will create a sphere or bubble around yourself. Imagine that you are in the center of this bubble. You may want to hone your visualization skills by practicing the magickal concentration exercise in Chapter 5.

def•i•ni•tion

The energy raised by you while you are doing magick takes the form of a cone. That's where the term **cone of power** comes from. In your mind's eye, visualize the cone of power, which is made of your energy, so that its peak points toward your desired goal.

Building a Cone of Power

Once you are safe inside your magick circle with all your tools, begin to build up your energy to form a *cone of power.* After grounding yourself and preparing your work area and magickal objects, start out with your magickal intent—what do you want to have happen? Concentrate on that positive outcome. See it happening in your mind. Then start to build your

energy by chanting, swaying, or drumming. Put your intent into your activities and increase their volume, pace, and intensity.

Directing a Cone of Power

When you feel the heat from all the energy you have built up, you are ready to direct your cone of power into a magickal tool or another object. If you are using a candle, grab the candle and channel all that energy into the wax. When you light the candle, the stored energy will be sent out to do your work. Or if you are working with Air magic, you can direct your cone of power out into the Air. In either case, focus on your intent, visualize the magick happening, and know that it will happen.

Protect Yourself

The best protection when doing magick is to stay positive yourself. If you don't mess with negative stuff, it won't come bothering you. You want to call upon positive forces to protect you and help get your magickal work done. And when working magick, stay inside your protective magick circle. That's what it's there for.

What About Black Magick?

Magick is like electricity. It is neither good nor bad. It just is. For a number of reasons, many modern witches avoid using the terms black magick and white magick. Thinking of black things as bad and white things as good is relying on an inaccurate and possibly racist stereotype. Furthermore, all things in life exist along a continuum. They are neither totally good nor totally bad, but lie somewhere between these two polarities.

You may hear witches speak of ethical magick or unethical magick, positive or negative magick. What matters when doing magick is your intent. If you intend to harm, you are doing negative magick. If you intend the greatest good for all, then you are working positive magick.

Webweaving

Up until about 1300 C.E., magick was practiced within the Catholic church. Bishop Albertus Magnus (1206–1280 C.E.) was said to be quite a skillful magickian. And a number of scholars believe that the eleventh-century Popes Benedict IX, Gregory VI, and John XX also knew their way with a spell.

What Magick Can Do for You

Magick is a wonderful healing tool. In this respect, it can help you psychologically, physically, and spiritually. It can help you become strong and confident in your body. It can also help you to break bad habits. Do you tend to come home from work and binge on junk food? Do you feel worse and worse every time you do it? You could try using knot magick on the waning Moon to bind your negative behavior. (For more on knot magick, see Chapter 22.) The period in which the Moon is waning, or appearing to get smaller in the sky, is great for ridding yourself of things you don't want—bad habits, addictions, or illnesses.

It's interesting to note that many of the herbs and spices that we use to flavor our food have magickal and healing properties. Basil, that staple of summer pasta dishes, will help you attract money. Allspice is also good for drawing money to you, and it can also be used to improve your luck and for healing.

Does the Witch Have to Harm to Heal?

If you think about it philosophically, everything has the right to live. This includes parasites, viruses, bacteria, or cancer cells. When you heal someone of a disease, you destroy the cause of that disease, the bug that is making the person sick. Killing off some rhinovirus cells will probably not cause any repercussions, even though what you are doing may be bad for that pesky cold bug.

But what if your very noisy neighbor has you at the end of your tether? It's okay to stop him from disturbing you, but don't harm him. What you want to do is treat his behavior, not his person. You would do that by binding his negative behavior. Is he keeping you up all night by screaming out the lyrics to an old Earth, Wind, and Fire song? If you've tried everything else—talking to him, your landlord, and the police—then you can do magick and get some peace and quiet. We discuss binding spells in Chapters 23 and 24.

From High Ritual to Everyday Magick

The magick that you do can involve a lot of formalized ritual, or it can be casual. Some covens use high ritual, meaning they follow a very detailed plan in casting the circle and in building and directing the cone of power. High rituals, because they are so detailed, can take a lot of time. Often, they feel kind of solemn and serious. (Wiccans also use high ritual for religious ceremonies that are distinct from magickal work.)

But magick can be as simple as making a bowl of soup or throwing a handful of dirt over your shoulder and mumbling a spell. If you are a solitary witch, the amount of ritual that you use depends on what feels comfortable and what works for you. For some people, the more ritual they use, the more effective their spells. Others don't like ritual and avoid it. As a solitaire, you can do whatever you want. So play around. Try using a complex ritual or two out of a book. Or write your own. See how they feel, and if you like them, use them.

So Mote It Be

Here's an exercise that will help strengthen your creative visualization skills. (Remember, you have to see the magick happening in your mind's eye.) Get a cardboard gift box that comes apart. Disassemble the box and put it back together again. Do it a few times so you are really familiar with the necessary actions. Then, close your eyes and imagine yourself going through each step until the box is complete. See it in your mind. Feel it in your fingers. Hear the sounds the cardboard makes as you bend it into shape. If you get frustrated, don't worry. Put it down and try it again later. Remember, practice does make perfect.

All Kinds of Magick

There are many kinds of low magick. All of them are accessible to you, so you have lots of magickal choices! The type of magick you decide to work with on a given day will depend on your magickal intent, your personal preferences, and what kind of tools you have at hand.

- Binding magick
- Candle magick
- Crystal magick
- Dream magick
- Elemental magick
- Fairy magick
- Flower magick
- Gem magick
- Glamour magick
- Healing magick
- Herbal magick
- Incense magick
- Kitchen magick
- Knot magick
- Mirror magick
- Paper magick
- Poppet magick
- Potion magick

- Powder magick
- Protection magick
- Scrying
- Sex magick
- Weather magick

Sex magick! Yup, there is some sex in witchcraft. When doing sex magick, you raise your cone of power, either alone or with a partner, by stimulating your sexual energy. All the while, you must concentrate on the magick and not think about the sex. Actually, it's really hard to do right. But it sure is fun trying!

The Least You Need to Know

- Magick, the direction and application of energy, is a powerful tool for change and self-discovery. Magick can help you reach your goals and know yourself.
- Be sure that your reasons for using magick are truly positive. If you harm someone, that harm will come back to you multiplied by three.
- Using magick requires effort. First you must try to reach your goal by mundane means; then, once you have decided to do magick, you still must work at it.
- You have many different types of magick available to you. Choose the kind you want to do based on your personal preferences, your goals, and your intuition.

Chapter 17

Enhancing Your Magick Power

In This Chapter

- The power of colors
- More magickal writing
- The energy that comes from you
- Things to wear
- The food you eat

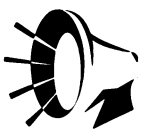
Witches use many different means to enhance their magick. Some are as simple as selecting the color of the object you will work with, or getting dressed in special clothes for ritual. Others involve a little more knowledge and understanding of magickal correspondences.

When you first start using magick, you'll want to begin with one or two simple enhancements so you don't get frustrated. As you gain more practice with your magick, you can add more. How elaborately you design your spells and how many magickal objects you use is up to you. The important point with magick (and with so many other disciplines) is to practice, practice, practice!

Working With Magickal Colors

Because our ability to perceive colors is dependent upon the light waves that bounce off objects, colors really do have their own energies. The energy of each color, or its light-wave vibration, has an effect on the human body. Colors have been scientifically proven to affect our moods and to aid in healing. In magick, colors help you fine-tune your intent, focus your energy, and help your magick work.

To use the energy of colors in your magick, select magickal objects—candles, powders, fabric, or string, for example—of a color appropriate to the work you plan to do.



Banish!

Avoid getting hung up on details. Worried that you don't have the absolute right color fabric for your poppet? Don't fret! You can always substitute white for a color that you can't find or reproduce. Remember that color is a tool to help you focus your intent. Your intentions are more important than the actual hue of the cloth. You don't want to become an obsessed perfectionist about your magick.

Colors have many associations. Some of your associations with a given color will be personal. Maybe you dislike green because, as a child, you were forced to wear an itchy, green dress that you hated. Even so, if you listed all the thoughts and images that occur to you about green, you would probably write down "money."

Here is a list of colors and their magickal associations.

Colors and Their Magickal Associations

Color	Magickal Association
Black	Divination, banishing, absorbing negative energy, protection, binding
Blue	Truth, tranquility, protection, hope, honor, change, psychic ability, the color of the Element of Water
Brown	Stability, integrity, justice, sensuality, endurance, animals, concentration, grounding
Gold	The God, vitality, strength, success, action, courage, confidence

Color	Magickal Association
Gray	Vision, neutrality, absorbing negativity
Green	Abundance, growth, healing, prosperity, fertility, employment, luck, jealousy, the color of the Element of Earth
Indigo	Insight, vision, change, flexibility, psychic abilities
Magenta	Intuition, change, spiritual healing, vitality
Orange	Courage, pride, ambition, enthusiasm, energy, friendship, communication, success, opportunities
Pink	Compassion, tenderness, harmony, affection, love, romance, spiritual healing
Purple	Growth, self-esteem, psychic ability, insight, inspiration, spirituality, success in business
Red	Sexual love, lust, passion, fire, willpower, courage, energy, strength, anger, the color of the Element of Fire
Silver	The Goddess, spiritual truth, intuition, receptivity, psychic ability, stability, balance
Turquoise	Creativity, discipline, self-knowledge, honor, idealism
Violet	Success, intuition, self-improvement, spiritual awareness
White	Cleansing, peace, protection, healing, truth, divination, tranquility; white also can be used in place of any other color
Yellow	Joy, vitality, intelligence, study, persuasion, charm, creativity, communication, the color of the Element of Air

If your loathing of green is so strong that it does not suggest abundance, growth, and prosperity to you, then don't use it for those purposes. Say you are working a spell with candle magick to get a new job that will bring you more money, and you hate green. You could use a purple candle for growth and success in business, an orange candle for success and opportunities, or a white candle, which can substitute for any other color. Or you could pick the color of your candle based on your own preferences and any personal associations that suggest money to you. The point is to do what works for you.

Magickal Signs and Symbols

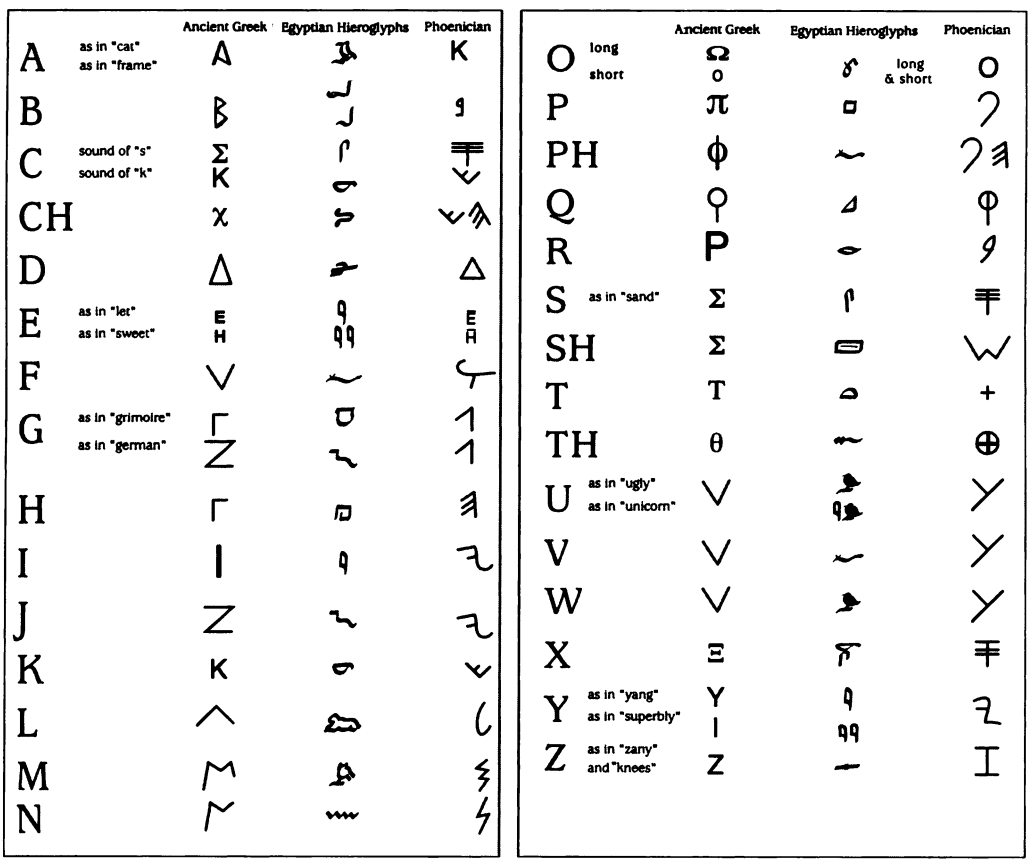
In addition to the pentacle and the pentagram, Wiccans use many other symbols. There are even magickal alphabets that you can use for writing anything magickal—from spells to your Craft name.

Magickal Alphabets

In Chapter 8, we introduced you to Theban Script. There are several other alphabets you can use, too. Using a magickal alphabet can help tell your subconscious that it is time to get to work to do magick. Because the magickal alphabet you choose is not something that you encounter every day, it can make your magickal workings feel more special. Its unfamiliarity can also help you to focus, because, when writing in a magickal alphabet, you'll have to pay attention to the formation of every letter, instead of dashing something off the way you could if you wrote normally. An added benefit to writing your spells in a special alphabet: No one else will be able to read them!

Webweaving

Some witches use ancient languages such as Latin or Greek for their spells. Others like the way spells sound in German, French, or Italian.



Magickal alphabets.

Magickal Symbols

You can put magickal symbols on any of the tools that you use for magick. You can even wear magickal symbols on your clothing. Like a magickal alphabet, magickal symbols speak to your unconscious. You can use symbols to make a statement. For example, a Goddess symbol on your wand could stand for your dedication to the Lady and your commitment to use magick for the good of all.

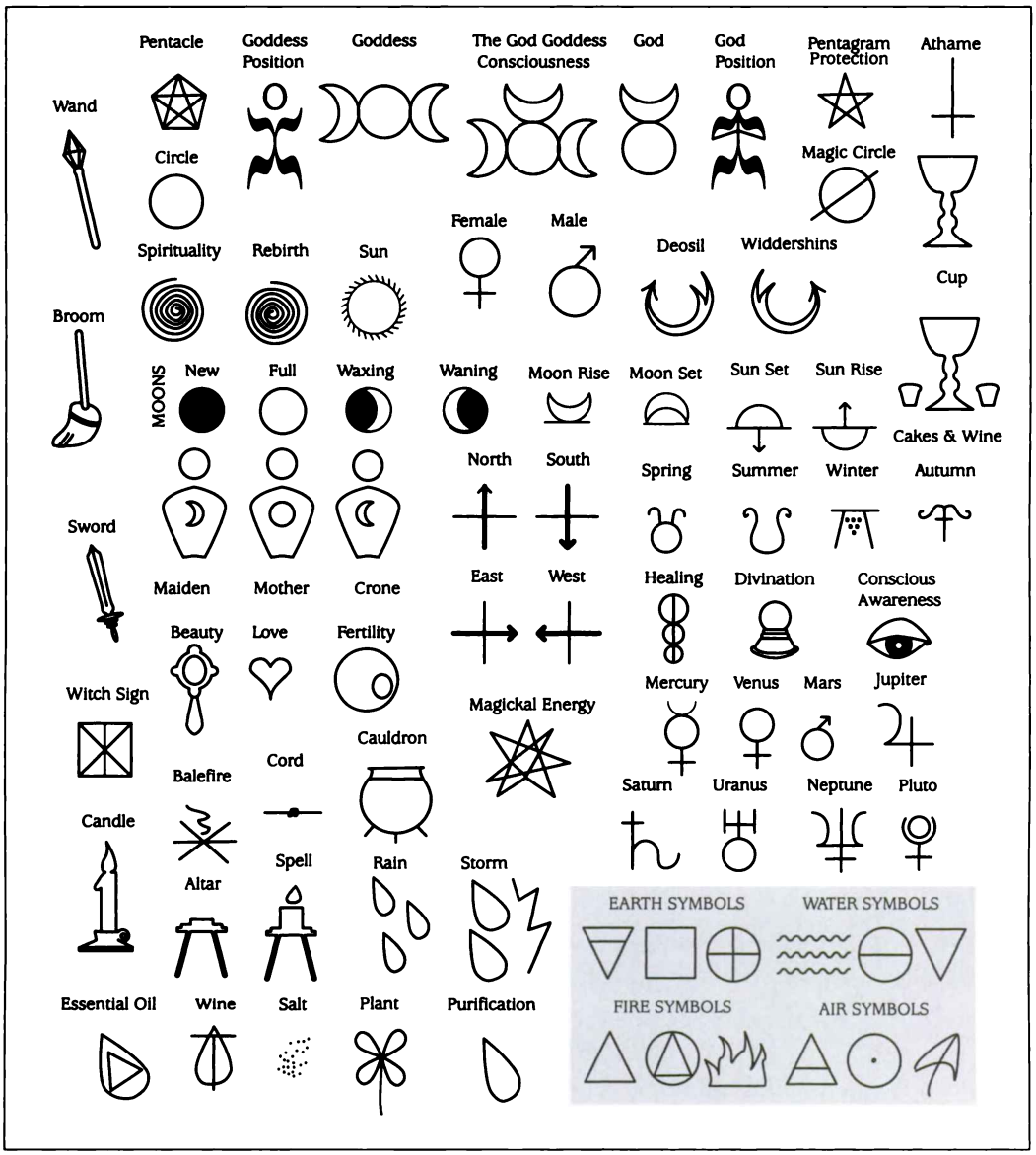
You can also use symbols to further define your magickal intention—carve them on a candle for candle magick, sew them on a poppet, or draw them on paper and place them inside your poppet. You can even use magickal symbols when writing in your Book of Shadows. If you don't feel like writing the word *cauldron*, you can draw the symbol instead.

Many witches use the magickal symbols listed here. Others use *runes*, and some use a combination of both.

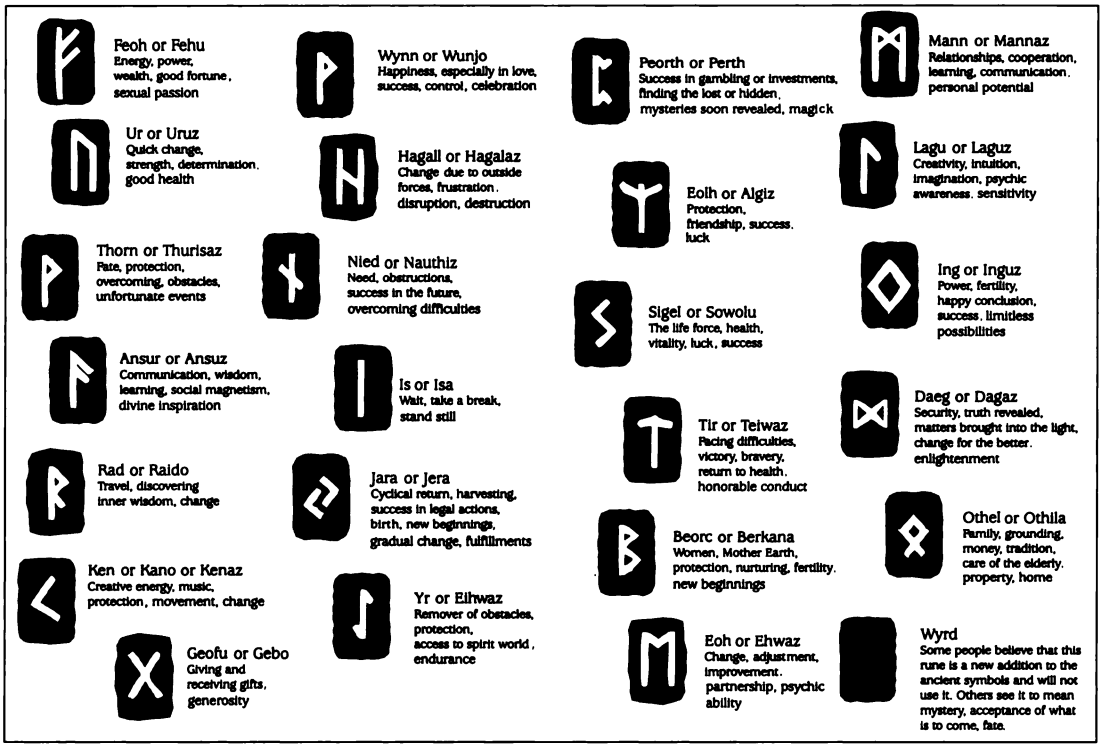
Runes

A rune is a character in an ancient Germanic alphabet. There are several different types of runes—Anglo-Saxon, Danish, and Swedish-Norwegian, for example. The word *rune* comes from a Middle English word that means "secret writing." Runes are also used as tools in divination and magick. Each letter in the runic alphabet has symbolic and magickal significance. According to legend, after the God Odin hung upside down from a tree for nine days he became the only true rune master. Only he completely understands the magickal significance of each rune. Many witches see the Hanged Man in the Tarot deck as Odin, hanging upside down reading the runes.

Each rune is usually written or inscribed on its own piece of wood or small clay tablet. You can pull on the energy of a rune when doing your magick. When doing this, you might want to inscribe the rune on one of your magickal tools. For example, if you were doing candle magick to help make yourself more attractive to a potential new mate and pulling on the energy of Wynn, you might want to draw Wynn on your candle. As a tool of divination, you can use runes in some of the same ways you use Tarot cards. You also can meditate on one rune and its meaning. Or you can use runes as guides in helping you decide how to handle a given situation. Are you having difficulty making a decision about an issue in your life? Try this: Hold the issue in your mind and draw three runes from a bag. What do they say about your situation?



Magickal symbols.


Feoh or Fehu
Energy, power, wealth, good fortune, sexual passion
Ur or Uruz
Quick change, strength, determination, good health
Thorn or Thurisaz
Fate, protection, overcoming, obstacles, unfortunate events
Ansur or Ansuz
Communication, wisdom, learning, social magnetism, divine inspiration
Rad or Raido
Travel, discovering inner wisdom, change
Ken or Kano or Kenaz
Creative energy, music, protection, movement, change
Geofu or Gebo
Giving and receiving gifts, generosity
Wynn or Wunjo
Happiness, especially in love, success, control, celebration
Hagall or Hagalaz
Change due to outside forces, frustration, disruption, destruction
Nied or Nauthiz
Need, obstructions, success in the future, overcoming difficulties
Is or Isa
Wait, take a break, stand still
Jara or Jera
Cyclical return, harvesting, success in legal actions, birth, new beginnings, gradual change, fulfillments
Yr or Eihwaz
Remover of obstacles, protection, access to spirit world, endurance
Peorth or Perth
Success in gambling or investments, finding the lost or hidden, mysteries soon revealed, magick
Eolh or Algiz
Protection, friendship, success, luck
Sigel or Sowolu
The life force, health, vitality, luck, success
Tir or Teiwaz
Facing difficulties, victory, bravery, return to health, honorable conduct
Beorc or Berkana
Women, Mother Earth, protection, nurturing, fertility, new beginnings
Eoh or Ehwaz
Change, adjustment, improvement, partnership, psychic ability
Mann or Mannaz
Relationships, cooperation, learning, communication, personal potential
Lagu or Laguz
Creativity, intuition, imagination, psychic awareness, sensitivity
Ing or Inguz
Power, fertility, happy conclusion, success, limitless possibilities
Daeg or Dagaz
Security, truth revealed, matters brought into the light, change for the better, enlightenment
Othel or Othila
Family, grounding, money, tradition, care of the elderly, property, home
Wyrd
Some people believe that this rune is a new addition to the ancient symbols and will not use it. Others see it to mean mystery, acceptance of what is to come, fate.

Runes.

Magickal Inscriptions

Another way to enhance your magick is by carving inscriptions on your magickal tools. For example, you could use an inscription to dedicate your tools, or you could simply inscribe them with your magickal name. Some witches create a *sigil* for themselves or make magickal monograms out of their names. When you make a magickal inscription, concentrate on the intent of the words or symbols you are forming. Your concentration will help to empower the object with your energy and good intentions.

Try creating a magickal sigil or symbol for yourself. Play around with your initials or the

def•i•ni•tion

A **sigil** is a magickal sign, seal, or image. The word comes from a Latin word that means "little distinctive mark," "small seal," or "signal." You can use sigils for just about anything—from inscribing your tools to letter writing to empowering a poppet.

letters of your magickal name either in our regular Roman alphabet or in another alphabet; or, use a combination of letters, magickal symbols, and runes. Once you've come up with your sigil, you can use it on your tools. You can even use it as a seal on your magickal correspondence.

That Something Extra

Your tools and magickal objects aren't the only things that can be enhanced by using the magickal properties of colors and symbols. Because what you wear on your body can also have an effect on your magickal workings, you'll want to consider your ritual outfit carefully.

Magickal Clothing

Your magickal clothing is another way you can add power to your magick. When you wear your magickal clothing, it lets the subconscious know that there is work to be done. Your magickal clothing can also carry magickal symbols or messages. This, too, will help empower the clothing. You could make a robe for yourself and add embroidery or appliqués.

As we mentioned in Chapter 6, you should wear your magickal clothing only for magickal purposes and ritual. Don't wear your magickal clothing for everyday activities. If you do, your outfit will cease to be magickal. And please wear clothing made of natural fibers. Synthetics are highly flammable and as a result can be dangerous in ritual. There's nothing worse than the thought of a flaming witch!

Magickal Jewelry

Jewelry is another way in which witches enhance their magickal powers. Again, remember that you should wear your magickal jewelry only when performing ritual or doing magick. Some witches own more than one pentacle necklace: one for every day and one for magickal purposes.

As we discussed in Chapter 6, the metals used in jewelry have their own energies and symbolic significance. Gold represents the God, and silver represents the Goddess. Many witches will wear a combination of both metals when doing ritual so as to have a balance between the male and female energies of the All. The stones and gems used in jewelry also have powers. We'll talk about the properties of the various minerals in Chapter 18.

Energy and Attitude

When you do magick you focus your intent and your energy on your desired goal. Obviously, in order to do this you must be able to concentrate and focus. Because the quality of your energy can affect your magick, you want your energy to be as clear and strong as it can be. And your attitude toward your goal, your magick, and yourself will also affect your energy and the outcome of your magick.

Channeling Chakras

The seven chakras are energy centers in the body that lie along your spine. Each chakra picks up and sends out a specific type of energy. Imagine them as wheels of spinning energy.

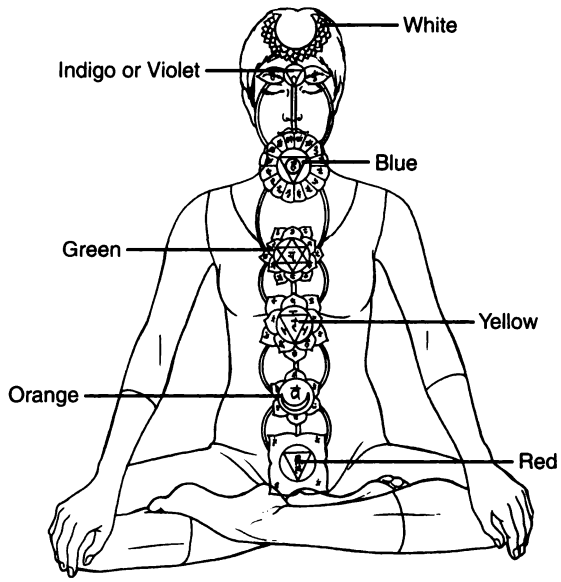
- The root or base chakra, located at the base of the spine near the tailbone, is all about survival and our basic physical needs for food, sleep, and shelter.
- The second chakra, the sacral or spleen chakra, which is just below the navel, is the center of sexuality, sensuality, and emotions.
- The third chakra, located at the solar plexus, is the seat of the will. The energy of the third chakra helps you make decisions, be responsible and creative, and carry out your plans.
- The fourth chakra, the heart chakra, concerns itself with giving and receiving love.
- The fifth chakra, the throat chakra, deals with our energies of communication, both in the mundane world and on the spiritual plane.
- The sixth chakra, located in the middle of the forehead just above the eyebrows (where the third eye—the organ of spiritual perception—is located), is the seat of psychic visions and clairvoyance.
- The seventh chakra, the crown chakra, is at the top of the head. This last chakra is our spiritual door, our connection to spiritual wisdom and the All.

If you have energy blockages in any of your chakras, they will negatively affect your magick by making it difficult for you to send or receive certain types of energy. You can work to open your chakras by meditating on the area of the chakra in your body. Color meditations can be particularly helpful in chakra work. You can also use specific gemstones to open each chakra. A blockage in a chakra usually has physical manifestations. For example, if you have chronic problems with receiving or giving

love, you may have a problem in your fourth, or heart, chakra. For information on how to balance your chakras with gemstones, see Melody's book *Love Is in the Earth* (Earth–Love Publishing House, 1995).

Each of the seven chakras has a color associated with it. The root chakra is red. The second chakra is orange, and the third is yellow. The heart chakra's color is green. The color of the fifth chakra is blue, while the sixth is indigo or violet. The seventh chakra, the crown chakra, is white.

(Drawing by Wendy Frost)



Magickal Attitude

Because your magick comes from you and is a product of your energies, keeping the right attitude is crucial. You must be absolutely clear on your magickal intent. You must know that you have tried all the mundane means at your disposal to get what you want. You also must know that your magick will not harm any other living thing. And you must have thought out how your magick is going to affect everyone involved, including you!

When you send out your energy to do magick, you must be able to see the desired result happening. Envision yourself reaching your goal. Give the image in your mind as many concrete details as you can. Imagine the smells, tastes, sounds, and physical sensations associated with the reaching of your goal as well. Feel that your magick is going to happen, and *know* that your magick is going to happen. Just hoping it will come true is not enough.

By the same token, you don't want to get cocky about your magick and start taking it for granted or using it for fun. What you do with magick is work. That's why we use

the phrase "magickal workings." Keep the proper respect for your powers and the powers of other entities that you draw on, and magick will serve you well. Yes, the energy of your magick comes from you, but you are only a tiny little part of the universe. Without the aid of other larger entities, your magickal work would not manifest. You may be the catalyst for the changes that you affect through magick, but you are not the sole operator. Respect and give thanks to all the entities, beings, and energies that aid the manifestations of your magickal work, and your magick should continue to work for you throughout your lifetime.

Talismans, Amulets, and Charms

Wearing or carrying *talismans*, *amulets*, or *charms* can enhance your magick and protect you from negative energy. All talismans, amulets, and charms need to be charged and blessed before you put them on.

Sometimes talismans look like the thing that you want to draw to you. For example, a money-drawing talisman might be round like a coin. Alternatively, your money-drawing talisman might be square but have symbols or runes for money or prosperity inscribed on it. A horseshoe that brings good luck or protection is another type of talisman. Some witches define talismans as man-made objects that have been imbued with power, and amulets as naturally occurring objects that have been so charged.

def•i•ni•tion

A **talisman** is an object that has been empowered to draw something to you. An **amulet** is an object that has been magickally empowered to protect you from a specific type of negative energy. A **charm** is an object that a person associates with luck or some other form of protection. It is usually very personal to him or her.

You wear or carry the charged amulet or talisman until the magick that you have charged it for is done. For example, say you were going into the hospital, you could make a healing talisman for yourself. You might want to use a piece of rose quartz, a stone that has healing energy of its own, to do this. During ritual, build up a cone of power, then focus it and all your healing energy into the piece of rose quartz. After you have done this, the quartz will be a healing talisman. Amulets are worn for protection. Alligator teeth are considered to be amulets that will protect you against danger.

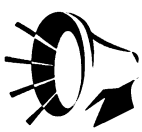
Charms are usually personal possessions that are not designed as magickal objects, but with which you have a special relationship. This relationship imbues the object with power. Say you were wearing a particular pair of striped socks the day that your

soccer team won a game for the first time. After that win, you might feel that wearing those socks will bring you either luck or protection. You may then wear the socks whenever you play sports.

Hospitals are required by law to respect your religious beliefs. So if you want to bring healing charms, talismans, or crystals into the operating room with you, the hospital will let you. The staff at many hospitals now understands that the spirit plays an important role in healing. They no longer just tolerate your ideas, but they respect your beliefs and may even encourage you to use alternative methods to help you heal.

Magickal Recipes

You can turn your favorite dish into a magickal dish by empowering one or more of the ingredients with magick. Remember in Chapter 16 how we talked about building a cone of power and directing the energy into a magickal tool such as a candle? Well, you can do the same thing with food. You can turn your favorite sugar cookies into special cookies used for ritual, sometimes known as Sabbat cookies, by directing concentrated energy into the vanilla or other ingredients.



Banish!

Use caution when working with herbs. Never ingest herbs that you are unfamiliar with. Before adding an herb to a recipe or making a tea from it, double-check that the herb is indeed edible. Many magickal herbs can be toxic, and some can be harmful if you are pregnant or nursing. Get all the facts before you partake. It's better to be safe than sorry!

Once you have baked these empowered cookies, you want to treat them properly. Keep them in a special tin. You can make the tin special by cleansing and consecrating it and then marking it with magickal symbols. Make sure to store it in a special place, too.

Eat these magickally empowered cookies, along with a special ritual tea, while preparing yourself for ritual or during ritual when you do the cakes and wine. Whether you eat the cookies as a part of your preparation for ritual or have them during ritual will all depend on what magickal intent you put into the cookies. While you eat your magickal cookies, meditate on the magick that you intend to do and give thanks for all that the Goddess has provided. Or reflect on the magick you have just done. With each bite, see the magick coming to pass.

Some foods have magickal correspondences. You could use such a food as an ingredient, or you could base a whole recipe on these foods or a combination of them. Here are some foods and their magickal correspondences:

- Almonds bring money and wisdom.
- Apples attract love, healing, and aid in magick.
- Apricots inspire romance.
- Avocados help bring love and lust.
- Bananas are for fertility, potency, and prosperity.
- Barley helps with love spells and healing, and can also be used for protection.
- Beans are used for divination and prosperity magick.
- Beets draw love.
- Blackberries promote healing and prosperity, and help draw money.
- Cabbage can help improve your luck.
- Carrots promote fertility and lust.
- Cashew nuts can help draw money.
- Celery promotes mental and psychic powers.
- Cherries promote love and feminine sexuality.
- Corn is used for protection, drawing luck, and promoting divination skills.
- Cucumbers are good for healing and fertility issues.
- Dandelion greens can aid your abilities of divination.
- Garlic is used in hex breaking and for protection.
- Grapes promote fertility and mental powers.
- Leeks are useful for protection and can be used in love spells.
- Lemons are used for purification and as an aid to mental clarity.
- Oats help to draw money.
- Oranges promote prosperity and luck.
- Mustard is used for strengthening mental powers and fertility.
- Pineapples bring love and money.
- Pomegranates help with divination and can bring wealth.

- Potatoes are used in folk medicine, for grounding, and magick.
- Rice promotes rain and fertility and can be used to draw money.
- Strawberries bring love and luck.
- Tomatoes are used to attract love.
- Turnips are good for protection and help to end relationships.
- Vanilla helps attract men and promotes mental energy.

Another way to prepare magickal recipes is to use herbs and spices with the appropriate magickal properties. You might drink mugwort tea before ritual to help open up your psychic awareness. Peppermint tea will also help increase your psychic abilities. Or you might want to add some cinnamon to those sugar cookies to draw money or success to you. We'll talk more about magickal herbs in Chapter 18.

The Least You Need to Know

- Because colors have their own energy, they can help your magick. But use only colors that work for you. Don't feel that you must use a certain color that you hate because it is supposed to be good for the magick you are planning.
- Using magickal symbols and alphabets can help you fine-tune your magickal intent and enhance your magick's power.
- Your energy will flow best through open chakras. If your chakras are blocked, work to open them before doing magick.
- Amulets and talismans can be charged to help. Amulets will deflect negative energy from you. Talismans will help to bring things you want to you. Charms usually develop on their own and are objects that you associate with good luck.
- Many common foods and herbs have magickal properties. If you are unfamiliar with a magickal herb, do not ingest it. While many herbs are edible, some are poisonous.

Chapter 18

Magick Powers of Nature

In This Chapter

- Everything you ever wanted to know about crystals
- ... and stones, too!
- The uses of magickal plants
- Essential oils—essentially magick and scent

Flowers open in the spring, and plants grow toward the Sun. Nature has its own magick. You can harness some of that energy when you do your magick.

Crystals, plants, and stones all have their own individual vibrational frequency. In that respect, you might say they are very similar to humans. When you first start working with these materials, you may want to think about them as new colleagues and learn as much as you can about them. You may find that you migrate toward a particular crystal, plant, or stone, just as you migrate toward certain people. Call it the coming together of two minds.

In Harmony with Nature

Witches honor and respect Nature. Doing so is part of the Wiccan religion. To truly give Nature her due, you have to understand her awesome power. Witches cultivate their knowledge of all aspects of Nature's energy and work in concert with that endless supply to pay homage to deity and to heal themselves, their loved ones, and the earth herself.

Working Magick with Crystals and Stones

Crystals and stones contain their own energy. You can use the crystal's or stone's energy to enhance your magick. Rose quartz, for instance, has a healing and loving energy. You could wear a piece of rose quartz to help heal a broken heart. Or you could build a cone of power and put your specific intent into a piece of rose quartz. Probably you would want to use a crystal or stone with an energy that "goes with" your intent and will amplify it. So it would make sense to put a loving or healing intent into rose quartz, while you might want to use malachite or bloodstone if your intent were to build wealth and a successful business.

def•i•ni•tion

A **crystal** is a stone with a particular, regular molecular structure. For magickal purposes, you don't really need to make a distinction between crystals and other minerals.

When you first get a stone cleanse it and energize it. You can do this by washing it in saltwater, seawater, or holy water. Then take it out into the light of the Full Moon. The Moon will both cleanse and energize the stone. You might say it wakes it up. You can also awaken it by tapping it gently on sand after washing it, or giving it a gentle slap with your fingers. This action gets the stone's attention.

Magickal Properties of Crystals and Stones

Which crystal or stone you use for which magickal purpose will depend on your own feelings and intuitions. If you are drawn to a particular stone, try it. It may be just what you need. The following crystals and stones are generally considered to have the properties listed.

Crystal or Stone	Magickal Properties
Agate	Courage, strength, love, protection
Alexandrite	Luck, love, spiritual transformation, joy
Amazonite	Success, joy, self-expression; awakens the heart and throat chakras
Amber	Changes negative energy into positive energy; protection
Amethyst	Courage, psychic energy, dreams, healing addictions (especially to alcohol), peace, happiness, love; opens crown chakra
Apache's tear	Protection, luck
Aquamarine	Courage, purification, peace, psychic awareness, self-expression; balances all the chakras
Aventurine	Money, luck, mental agility, visual acuity, peace, healing; opens the heart chakra
Azurite	Psychic energy, dreams, divination (the art of looking into the future), healing, concentration, transformation
Beryl	Energy, love, healing, psychic awareness, protection (especially from the weather and water)
Bloodstone	Courage, strength, victory, wealth, self-confidence, success in business and legal affairs; stops bleeding; helps regulate the first four chakras
Calcite	Centering, grounding, purification, money, peace; calms fears
Carnelian	Courage, sexual energy, verbal skill, peace; alleviates jealousy, apathy, fear, and rage
Celestite	Verbal skills, healing, compassion, calming; aids growth
Chrysocolla	Wisdom, peace, love, communication, vitality
Chrysoprase	Prosperity, luck, happiness, friendship, protection, healing
Citrine	Psychic powers, protection, creativity, sexual energy; deflects nightmares
Clear quartz	Intensifies energy (both positive and negative)
Coral	Protection from evil; resolves conflict
Diamond	Courage, strength, healing, protection, spirituality, mental and sexual abilities

continues

continued

Crystal or Stone	Magickal Properties
Dolomite	Relieves sorrow
Emerald	Prosperity, mental and psychic abilities, dreams, meditation, visual acuity, love, peace, balance; opens the heart chakra
Fluorite	Balances and stabilizes relationships
Garnet	Strength, physical energy, healing, protection, purification, compassion; opens the root and crown chakras
Geode	Fertility, childbirth, meditation, freedom of spirit, psychic ability, dreams, astral travel
Hematite	Grounding, calming, healing, divination, intuition, physical strength; aids restful sleep
Herkimer diamond	Enhances psychic abilities and clairvoyance
Infinite	Works with angels and your past, present, and future
Iolite	Establishes accurate visions
Jade	Healing, protection, wisdom, prosperity, love, long life, fertility, courage, peace
Jasper	Healing, protection, health, beauty, energy
Jet	Protection, hex breaking; dispels fear
Kunzite	Creativity, communication, peace, balance, relaxation, grounding
Kyanite	Balances energies and aids in meditation
Lapis lazuli	Courage, joy, love, fidelity, psychic abilities, protection, healing, beauty, prosperity
Lepidolite	Peace, spirituality, physical strength, luck, protection, psychic ability, emotional balance; deflects nightmares
Lodestone	Cleanses crystals and aligns their energies, balances the chakras, removes obstacles
Malachite	Power, energy, protection, love, peace, success in business, vision quests, gardening
Marble	Protection, dream recall, meditation
Meteorite	Enhances work with spiritual and celestial beings
Moldavite	Psychic abilities, mental and emotional balance

Crystal or Stone	Magickal Properties
Moonstone	Grounding, love, divination, sleep, gardening, protection, youth, harmony, peace, magick, travel
Obsidian	Grounding, divination, protection; deflects negativity
Onyx	Emotional balance, self-control, binding, protection (especially against someone else's magick), strength
Opal	Beauty, prosperity, luck, power, psychic abilities, visual acuity, emotional balance
Pearl	Manifests truth, peace, and serenity
Peridot	Protection, prosperity, sleep, health, emotional balance, intuition
Rhodochrosite	Energy, peace, calm, love, mental activity, emotional balance; balances the root chakra
Rhodonite	Peace, mental clarity, memory, confidence; opens the crown chakra
Rose quartz	Love, peace, happiness, healing (especially of the emotions)
Ruby	Prosperity, power, courage, integrity, joy; deflects nightmares
Rutilated quartz	Intensifies any quartz energy, enhances communication
Sapphire	Psychic abilities, inspiration, love, meditation, peace, healing, power, prosperity, protection
Smokey quartz	Healing, directing and absorbing energy, altered states; dissolves negative energy
Sodalite	Healing, meditation, wisdom, calm, grounding, stress reducer
Sugilite	Eliminates negative energies, creates love and harmony
Sunstone	Protection, energy, health, passion, sexuality
Tektites	Enhances any energy field; enlightenment
Tiger's eye	Courage, prosperity, protection, energy, luck, judgment and common sense, honesty, divination; eases depression
Topaz	Protection, healing, dieting, prosperity, love, emotional balance, tranquility, creativity
Tourmaline	Love, friendship, prosperity, business, peace, sleep, energy, courage, protection, inspiration; opens the third-eye center, or the sixth chakra

continues

continued

Crystal or Stone	Magickal Properties
Turquoise	Courage, protection, prosperity, luck, friendship, healing, communication, happiness, emotional balance, astral travel; strengthens all the chakras
Unakite	Enhances personal power, changes negative energy into positive energy
Zebra stone	Promotes physical energy
Zircon	Protection (especially from theft); beauty, love, peace, sexual energy, healing, mental alertness, emotional balance

As you can see, all the stones have more than one magickal use, and there is a fair amount of overlap in terms of which stones you can use for which purposes.

Finding, Buying, and Storing Crystals and Stones

Experts say you do not find a crystal or stone; it finds you. Most crystals and stones find their people in stores, although sometimes they hook up in quarries, riverbeds, forests, or beaches. If you are interested in crystals and stones, you probably should begin by reading as much as you can about them. You may also want to attend a rock and mineral show and investigate displays at metaphysical, New Age, and mineral shops.

Webweaving

Some witches make crystal tinctures by soaking their stones in oil or distilled water. After a few days, they remove the stones and use a few drops of the liquid in tea or as anointing oil. Of course, they always check to make sure that their crystals are completely nontoxic and clean before they ingest any such tincture.

When looking for a crystal or stone, examine a lot of them. Pick up the stones and see how they feel. Pay close attention to which ones attract you most strongly. The crystal or stone that pulls your attention may not be the prettiest one in the bunch. If you are attracted to an ugly stone, just know that it is the stone you are meant to have.

If you find a stone with a natural hole through it, hang on to it. Such holey stones, or holy stones, are rare. It's said that if you look through the hole, you'll be able to see into the Realm of Faery.

Unless you intend to use a crystal for scrying, you don't have to seek out the clearest, most translucent

one. Crystals that have cloudy "ghosts," inclusions of other minerals, and other crystals inside of them carry a lot of energy. Buy the stone that feels right to you, and try not to worry too much that you could have bought a cheaper one. A cheaper stone that you can't relate to really is no bargain at all.

You may not need the stone or crystal right at the moment, but you will need it in the future. Sometimes a stone to which you are attracted will turn out to be something that a person you know needs. When this happens, you'll usually be able to tell because you'll have the urge to give that stone to the person in question.

You can also learn a lot from the stones themselves. To do this, you need to develop a relationship with your crystal. Try meditating with it and keep an open mind. Crystals communicate in subtle ways. Because they have been around for hundreds of years, their energy can seem very slow. After some time, you may start to receive messages from your crystal in the form of hunches or intuitions.

Stones and crystals are best stored in a cool, dark place. You can keep all your stones and crystals together in one bag and store it in your magickal tool chest. You'll need to cleanse your stones of energy periodically, especially if other people have been handling them. Because stones and crystals are so sensitive to energy, the people who touch them will affect them, and you don't want someone else's negative vibe hanging around your stones. So cleanse your stones regularly with sunlight, moonlight, saltwater, or holy water.

So Mote It Be

If someone you love brings you flowers (especially roses), dry them after you are done enjoying them. You can do this by tying them together and hanging them upside down in such a way that air can circulate around them. The dried petals will hold the loving energy of the giver. Use the petals in any magick having to do with love, and your energies will be amplified by the love that is already in the flowers.

Working Magick with Herbs and Botanicals

You can use herbs and botanicals in many ways. If, for instance, you are working with abundance, you can choose an herb or botanical associated with abundance and sew it into a poppet or a dream pillow. Or you can place it in a small bag and wear it around your neck, or hang some of the herb in your bedroom. Some herbs can be burned, and others can be added to the water of your ritual bath. If you suffer from allergies,

be aware that even in dried form herbs can be powerful allergens. You might want to try using herbal extracts instead.

Magickal Herbs and Botanicals

Here are a few herbs (plants used for seasoning or medicinal purposes) and botanicals (other plants) commonly used in magick.

A word of caution—many magickal herbs and botanicals can be toxic. Never ingest an herb unless you have checked it out with an herbalist first. You should know both the magickal and the medicinal properties of an herb. You should also be aware of any interactions an herb could have with another herb, with any medication that you are taking, or any possible allergic reactions it could cause. If you are thinking of making your own herbal tea, stop by your local herb shop first. Read to someone on staff a list of your ingredients to make sure what you are planning is safe. There are also many excellent books that can tell you whether an herb is edible or not.

Herb or Botanical	Magick Properties
Angelica	Protection, healing, visions; removes hexes
Balm of Gilead	Love, manifestations, protection, emotional healing
Burdock	Protection, healing, happy home
Carnation	Protection, strength, healing, vitality
Celery seeds	Lust; mental and psychic powers
Dandelion	Divination, calling spirits, favorable winds
Dill	Money, love, lust, protection (especially of children)
Echinacea	Strengthens spells
Elderberries	Prosperity, protection, sleep, banishing of negative entities
Fenugreek	Money, mental powers
Frankincense	Spirituality, protection, banishing of negative entities, consecration
Gardenia	Love, peace, healing; enhances spiritual connections
Ginger	Power, success, money
Ginseng	Love, lust, vitality, wishes, healing, beauty, protection
Horehound	Protection, healing, mental powers, banishing of negative entities

Herb or Botanical	Magick Properties
Hyssop	Purification, protection, prosperity
Irish moss	Money, luck, safe travel
Jasmine	Love, money, sleep, dreams
Juniper	Protection (especially from thieves), love, health, banishing of negative entities
Mugwort	Divination, clairvoyance, psychic powers, dreams, protection, strength, astral projection
Mustard	Fertility, money, protection, mental acuity
Nettle	Protection, healing, lust, banishing negative entities
Orris	Long-lasting love, divination, protection
Parsley	Purification, protection, lust, fertility
Passion flower	Peace, friendship, popularity, sleep
Pennyroyal	Protection, peace, strength (especially during travel), antiseasickness
Peppermint	Healing, purification, sleep
Pine	Healing, protection, fertility, money, banishing negative entities
Poppy	Fertility, love, money, luck, sleep
Raspberry	Love, protection of the home; alleviates labor pains
Rose	Love, beauty, luck, psychic powers, protection
Rosemary	Protection, purification; chases away nightmares
Rue	Mental powers, healing, love, curse-breaker
Sage	Wisdom, prosperity, healing, longevity, money
Slippery elm	Stops gossip, aids verbal development
Star anise	Psychic and spiritual powers, luck
Valerian	Love, sleep, purification, protection, peace
Vetivert	Love, luck, money, protection against theft
Violet	Spiritual protection, luck, love, lust, wishes, peace, sleep, healing
Willow	Love, divination, protection, healing
Witch hazel	Protection, chastity, healing of broken hearts
Wormwood	Psychic powers, protection, safe car travel, love, calling spirits

Finding, Buying, and Storing Herbs and Botanicals

You can grow your own magickal herbs and botanicals, or you can buy them at a metaphysical or herb shop. Some of them may even be available at a local farmers' market. If you grow your own, you can consult an almanac to find good planting and harvesting times. You should also read up on the best methods and necessary precautions for drying your herbs. Some herbs, especially toxic ones, can give off a noxious vapor while drying. There are many books available about growing and preparing plants for magickal purposes. If herbs are new to you, you may be more comfortable buying what you need. As you gain experience, you can begin to forage for herbs or cultivate your own magickal garden.

You'll want to store your dried herbs in a cool, dry place and keep them out of the light. Sunlight will bleach your herbs and pull the energy out of them. You should also make sure that insects or mice don't get into them. If you find that your herbs have become infested, don't use them. They should keep for a long time, but once they do begin to deteriorate, dispose of them and get new ones. When you need to throw herbs away take them outside and give them back to the earth.

Because plastic can start to break down, it is best to keep your herbs in glass jars. Use big labels so you can clearly mark each container. In addition to the herb's name, put the date of purchase on each label. It's also a good idea to note on the label if the herb is toxic. (And if so, keep the jar in a safe place out of reach from children, pets, and inquisitive adults!)

It's also a good idea to take a class on the medicinal uses of herbs. Many metaphysical shops offer such classes, as do herb shops. If your local herb store does not have classes, you should at least be able to ask questions of the herbalist on staff.

Banish!

Many herbs, such as the hallucinogens that were used in flying ointment—a toxic preparation that, when rubbed on the body, caused witches in the historical past to feel as if they were flying—are readily absorbed through the skin. So when preparing fresh herbs for drying, it's a good idea to wear gloves to protect yourself from any toxins and safeguard your skin in case you turn out to be allergic to any of the plants you are using.

Working With Essential Oils

You can use essential oils for healing, cleansing, blessing, banishing, empowering, anointing, and consecrating. And, of course, you can enjoy them for their great scents! When working with pure essential oils, wear gloves; the oils are very potent and can burn your skin. Because they are so strong, essential oils are usually cut with a *carrier oil.* This way they won't damage your skin. In addition, carrier oils help to stretch your dollar. When you're dealing with an essential oil that can cost as much as $90 a dram (the equivalent of 0.0625 of an ounce), you'll want to stretch it as much as you can!

def•i•ni•tion

Carrier oils such as grapeseed, apricot, jojoba, almond, or vegetable oil are used to dilute essential oils. The carrier oil helps you stretch your essential oil and helps prevent the essential oil from burning your skin.

After they are mixed with the carrier oil, essential oils are blended together according to your magickal purpose. When designing a mixture, you'll also want to pay attention to how well the different scents combine and your own preferences and associations. You can also mix in the energy of plants and stones by adding herbs or crystals to your oils.

When blending oils, you should concentrate on putting energy and your magickal intent into the mixture. You can do this by saying a chant or incantation, such as ...

With this magick oil I mix,
Another magickal spell I'll fix.
Fire, Water, Earth, and Air,
To know, to will, be silent, and dare.
As this magick is sent out to thee,
Let it grow and set it free.
This is my will, so mote it be!

Or you can mix your oil and then charge it during ritual by raising a cone of power and directing the energy into the oil. One easy way to do this is to stand before one of the Elements in your magick circle. If you were working with love, passion, or sexuality, you would face Fire in the South. Repeat over and over the name of the Element that represents your intent, in this case Fire. Start out softly and slowly and increase the speed, volume, and intensity until you feel ready to burst with all the energy. Grab your vial of oil and send the energy into the oil. Once you've done that, your oil is charged with the power of the Element and ready to use. Many witches

like to dress candles for candle magick with essential oils. You can also use it to anoint your body, your magickal tools, or other objects.

Another great way to use essential oils is to put a few drops of them in an oil burner. The oils don't actually burn, but are heated to the point of evaporation, and their scent fills the air. The scent will affect you psychically and physically. You can use certain oils to stimulate a meditative state during ritual or use them as part of your routine to prepare for ritual. Either way, you can't go wrong. And your nose, surrounded by great, natural smells, will be happy, too!

All About Essential Oils

Consult the following list of essential oils and their magickal correspondences before making a blend. Pick your oils based on your magickal purpose and your sense of smell. But however delicious they may seem, never, never take essential oils internally! Be aware that camphor oil can cause toxic reactions in some people, even at a dilution of 4 percent essential oil to a base of carrier oil. For safety's sake, don't use camphor oil on the skin, even in a blend.

Essential Oil	Magickal Properties
Basil	Money, harmony; promotes sympathy, happiness, peace
Benison	Peace; increases power, awakes the conscious mind
Bergamot	Money, protection
Black pepper	Protection, courage, banishing; spices up a romance
Camphor	Purification, healing (particularly of respiratory problems), chastity
Cardamom	Love, lust, sexual energy
Cedar	Balance, spirituality, courage, dreams
Chamomile	Meditation, peace, dreams
Cinnamon	Money, psychic awareness, lust, purification
Clove	Courage, protection, sexual attractiveness, lust; adds spice to any situation
Coriander	Love, health, and healing
Cypress	Consecration, protection, healing (especially of psychological pain), longevity
Eucalyptus	Health, healing (especially of respiratory problems), purification

Essential Oil	Magickal Properties
Geranium	Protection, happiness, love
Ginger	Sexuality, love, courage, money, prosperity
Grapefruit	Purification; banishes a sour disposition
Jasmine	Love, psychic awareness, dreams, peace, sex
Juniper	Protection, meditation, purification, healing, communication
Lavender	Health, peace, relaxation, sleep, purification, love
Lemon	Energy, mental clarity, wit, cleansing
Lemon verbena	Love, purification
Lemongrass	Psychic awareness, purification, lust
Lime	Purification, cleansing, protection, fertility, love
Lotus	Healing, luck, opening to spirit
Magnolia	Meditation, psychic awareness, love, fidelity
Myrrh	Spirituality, meditation, healing, blessing
Neroli	Happiness, protection, purification
Oak moss	Money, prosperity, fertility
Orange	Purification, heightened awareness, luck
Palmarosa	Love, healing, protection
Patchouli	Money, physical energy, attraction, protection, sex
Peppermint	Purification, mental energy, psychic powers
Petitgrain	Protection, removing evil or negativity
Pine	Purification, money, healing, cleansing
Rose	Love, peace, sexual desire, beauty, maternal love
Rosemary	Love, healing, energy; breaks hexes
Sandalwood	Spirituality, meditation, sex, healing, psychic awareness
Sweet pea	New friends, love, happiness
Tangerine	Strength, power, vitality
Tuberose	Calm, peace, love, happiness, psychic powers
Vetivert	Money, prosperity, attractiveness; breaks hexes
Yarrow	Courage, love, psychic awareness; banishes negative entities
Ylang-ylang	Love, peace, sex, healing

Finding, Buying, and Storing Essential Oils

When you first start using essential oils, you'll probably want to buy prepared blends. For example, it is often cheaper to buy a small bottle of house blessing oil (which can include basil, angelica, hyssops, and lavender oils, among others) than it is to acquire all the ingredients to make the blend. Whether you're buying blends or pure essentials, you should make sure that what you're getting really are essential oils and not fragrance oils. Fragrance oils, synthetics that are designed to smell like the real thing, often trigger asthma attacks in people who are susceptible. Although many witches don't like to use fragrance oils, sometimes a substitution is necessary. Essential rose oil can cost upward of $100 a dram!

If you do decide to get some oils, buy only the few that you need the most. There's no sense in buying a bottle of each kind of oil if you're not going to use them. And buy in small quantities as oil will go bad.

Keep your oils and oil blends in a dark place, preferably in a dark glass bottle. Light and heat will cause your oils to go rancid. Most blended oils will keep for about six months. Remember to label and date all your oils before you put them away. And smell them before you use them—you don't want to work magick with rancid oil.

The Least You Need to Know

- Crystals and stones have their own inherent energy. You can use those forces on their own, or you can charge stones to aid your magick.
- You can use botanicals and dried herbs as stuffing, make teas or tinctures from them, or add them to bath water.
- Use essential oils for anointing, to perfume your ritual room or in your ritual bath.
- You can add crystals, herbs, and botanicals to your essential oils to achieve the desired balance of energies for your magickal work.

Part 5

Any Time Is the Right Time for Magick

As long as you are prepared—in mind, body, and spirit—you can do magick at any time. You can also select the best time for the particular type of working you are planning to do. In this section, we'll look at your level of preparedness. We'll also look to the heavens, and you'll learn how the stars and a basic knowledge of astrology can enhance your magick.

Chapter 19

To Know, to Dare, to Will, to Keep Silent

In This Chapter

- What you should know about being a witch
- Do you dare?
- The importance of willpower
- Silence is golden
- The witches' pyramid and your magick

You have come this far. You've learned a lot about Wicca and witchcraft. Now is the time to decide if you are really ready to get serious. Do you really want to become a witch? And if so, is this the right time for you to do it?

Many witches stick to the conditions expressed by the witches' pyramid. You can think of the witches' pyramid in terms of the macrocosm—your entire spiritual and magickal practice. You can also think of it with regard to the microcosm—each act of magick that you do. If you are going to do a successful spell, you need *to know* the basics of magick and spellcraft. You'll need *to will* yourself to keep at it, practice, and focus your energy.

You'll need *to dare* to accept the responsibilities that come with your power and the consequences of your actions. Finally, you'll want *to keep silent* about your magickal working.

When looking at the larger picture, the macrocosm, the witches' pyramid can represent the entire concept of the Wiccan lifestyle. This is perhaps the toughest challenge of all. But without a firm base of strong convictions, a witch cannot progress. The stronger and richer the soil of your conviction, the stronger and better witch you will grow to be.

To Know ...

This is the first building block of the witches' pyramid. Before witches do magick they must know what they are going to do, what magickal tools they will need, what their intent is, and what the karmic repercussions of their actions will be. And finally they must know that their magick is going to happen.

... If Wicca Is Right for You

Most people who come to the Craft have always marched to the tune of a different drummer. Or as Denise puts it, they've felt like round pegs in square holes and have not found the right answer in other religions. Maybe as a kid you hugged a tree and felt there was life and something really precious inside it. Or maybe you have always had a special feeling for animals. Many Wiccans were plagued by a sense of dissatisfaction when they practiced religions that don't take into account the central role of Nature and the earth. If God created both humankind and Nature, how is it possible, they ask, that he cares only about humans? Isn't Nature equally his creation? Doesn't he care about it, too?

Webweaving

Most covens won't allow a prospective witch to dedicate until he or she has studied for a year and a day. If you're going solo, you might want to spend a year and a day learning and absorbing before you commit to becoming a witch. We've laid out a lesson plan for your year-and-a-day study in Chapter 25—check it out!

Most Wiccans don't like to be told what to do or to hear stock answers. They find their truths for themselves and define their own inner spirituality. Many have found great joy and fulfillment in working one-on-one with deity. Wiccans are also open to new ideas, to the existence of other realms, and are seekers on the unconventional path of the spirit.

Have you always felt a spiritual hunger? Since you picked up this book, have you started to feel more satisfied? Then Wicca may be the path for you.

... Where to Start

You have to start within yourself. After you have determined that you want to try Wicca, you need to start listening and gathering information. Open your ears and pay attention to what people are talking about in New Age shops. Visit libraries and bookstores. Surf the Internet, and read everything you can get your hands on about the Craft. The more you read, the more it all starts to make sense and form comprehensible patterns. The ideas that you have heard and sort of believed will fall into place. But you have to be hungry for it because it does involve work, searching, and study on your part. You also should start by trying simple rituals.

... How to Advance Yourself in the Craft

Before you start to practice magick, it is really important that you take the time to learn the basics. Learn all you can about deity, the Elements, and ritual. Only when you really understand what magick is should you try to work with it.

Start with a beginner's book, such as the one you're holding in your hands, and use it as the outline for your course of study. Read several books about each aspect of the Craft. Acquaint yourself with as many different authors and viewpoints as you can. Gather knowledge from wherever you can get it. You need to know a lot before you commit yourself to the Wiccan path.

... What to Do with the Responsibility

The responsibility of being a witch is not a burden. It is part of what it means to be empowered. When you shoulder your responsibilities instead of avoiding them, you become empowered. The more you are willing to take on, the stronger you will become. And the more empowered you are, the more able you will be to empower others and to change the world. In helping to change the world, you want to make sure that you do not force your beliefs on anyone. You may believe fervently in the Wiccan path, but you cannot try to convert your friends and relatives. You have to maintain respect for their beliefs even if they are counter to your own. If you live with other people, this may mean that you have to be discreet and not discuss your personal beliefs.

Banish!

Don't cram your newfound knowledge of Wicca down the throats of your friends and relatives. It's only natural to want to share something that is new and exciting in your life. But trying to convert others runs counter to the tradition of the Craft. So don't go knocking at your neighbor's door, bent on conversion. Remember that Wicca is not the path for everyone.

To Dare ...

We've reached the second level of the witches' pyramid. When it comes to magick, you have to determine if you have the guts to cause real change to happen. Do you dare, in your life at the present time, to make the necessary changes in yourself to become a witch?

... To Take the Challenge

Becoming a witch is an immense challenge. It could require that you change your entire lifestyle and will probably spur you to look at the world and yourself differently. For one thing, you'll have to confront your dark side. A lot of us would rather not examine the truth about ourselves. Neither do we wish to contemplate what we have done and are doing with our lives. But we need to confront these issues squarely and change the aspects we don't like.

You may face the challenge of losing friends or having family members stop speaking to you as you begin to change. If you're a woman and are part of a family in which the women are very dependent, you will seriously disturb the family dynamics when you begin to stand on your own two feet, as all witches must do.

Choosing to walk the Wiccan path is also a challenge in terms of your stamina. To be a witch, you need the mental stamina to study for years. No one will hand you pat answers on a plate. You must seek out your own truths.

... to Accept Responsibility

There are many responsibilities that come with being a witch. One of the major responsibilities is to understand what you are doing. If you practice magick without a firm base of knowledge and an understanding of your own actions, you can make your life miserable. And you can make the lives of other people miserable as well.

When you become a witch, you literally take on responsibility for the care of Earth. Sharing what you have is part of the bond that you have made with the Goddess. In keeping with your promise, you'll want to put food out for the local birds, squirrels, raccoons, and other animals that live in your area.

As a witch, you also have to take responsibility for yourself and your own power. That may mean looking at different ways to handle situations in your life and learning to control your temper and your feelings of self-pity. Witches don't whine and yell about situations they don't like. They act. By the same token, you will no longer be

able to mope when things don't go your way and indulge in a case of "oh, poor me." As a witch, you control what happens in your life, so you can no longer blame things on other people. You have to accept the responsibility for everything that occurs in your life. So instead of blaming your financial problems on others, you will take control and fix them. Witches don't expect to be taken care of. Once you become a witch, you will probably find that rather than having people come to your rescue, you'll dare to shoulder responsibility and do the rescuing yourself.

... To Confront the Issues of the Day

As a witch, and as an informed citizen, you need to read the newspaper and listen to the news. Keep abreast of politics on the local, national, and worldwide levels, because the decisions made by political leaders affect what happens to our planet. The people in office may facilitate the destruction of wetlands or they may help to protect ecologically sensitive areas. You need to pay attention to what is going on, get out and vote, and get your friends to vote, too. If you keep your head in a box of sand, many acres of land and many species of animals could be lost. We all have the responsibility to look at the big picture. Yes, it might be really convenient for you if a developer built a new shopping mall just one mile from your home. However, you need to be aware that the developer is planning to build it on the only wetlands in your county.

If we don't look out for Nature's creatures, pretty soon they won't be here at all. Because of strong beliefs in protecting Nature and animals, many Wiccans are involved with environmental organizations or with animal rights groups. As a witch you have to be brave enough to face the issues of the day, get involved, and help bring about change for the better.

You also need stamina to get involved in what is going on around you, in this realm and in other realms. Do you have the courage to confront what is happening to animals all over the world? Can you accept the challenge to protect Nature and her creatures? That may mean speaking out against neighbors who mistreat their pets, puppy mills, hunting, or protesting the opening of a new shop that sells furs.

Webweaving

Since 1971, Greenpeace has worked to protect wildlife and the environment. The organization has an informative website (www.greenpeaceusa.org) that will get you up to speed on the issues of the day. PETA campaigns against animal abuse in its many forms. Their website (www.peta-online.org) will let you know how you can get involved.

... To Get Involved in Your Community

Many Wiccans put their energies into political, social, or environmental action. The important thing is that you reach out to the world beyond you. Add your voice to the Pagan voices calling and working for social and political change. Keep up with the political issues of the day. Or check out your local community service center and see what's happening in your community.

If you love animals, you might volunteer at an animal shelter. You could help educate people to control the pet population by working with a spay-and-neuter program. Perhaps someone needs your skills to help fundraise for a program to help low-income people get their animals fixed. Or you could devote some time to helping wild animals by collecting money for a wildlife organization or volunteering at a wildlife center.

If you'd rather work with people, visit an assisted living community or nursing home and take the time to listen to the residents—you'll probably hear some great stories. You might want to volunteer at your local homeless shelter or shelter for battered women. Or you could organize a crime-watch group in your neighborhood. Most people say they don't have the time to do volunteer work. Most witches just do it. Typically in a coven you are required to put in a certain number of hours of community service. But you do it, not because you have to, but because you want to make a difference. So find an organization for which you have an affinity and help them create change.

So Mote It Be

Make a list of all the community projects you have thought about joining. No ideas? Look under Social and Human Services in the Yellow Pages. And don't forget about organizations that are devoted to animals. Or check to see if your area has a volunteer workers' placement service. Get information from four different organizations about their volunteer needs. If their needs fit your skills and temperament, pick one of these organizations and go check it out. Don't sign up for volunteer work that is impossible for you to do. Find something that works for you and give of yourself. When you do, it brings you increased energy and a sense of empowerment. Yes, you really can make a difference in the world!

To Will ...

"To will" is the third level of the witches' pyramid. When working magick, this is seen as gathering the will to form a cone of power and focusing the will so that you can see the magick happen as you send the energy out. Can you muster sufficient willpower to become a witch? We can see it happening, but can you?

... To Follow Through

Most people start their study of witchcraft with all the good intentions in the world. They run out and buy all these wonderful new toys—athames, cauldrons, pentacles, and candles—but they don't know what to do with them. They sit down with a book, discover how much work is involved, and everything gets put in the box with the old knitting. Yeah, they think, I still want to be a witch, but ....

If you want to be a witch, you've got to have willpower on several fronts. You'll need the willpower to get up and go to class, network, and meet people—even if it is cold and drizzling outside. Of course, it would be easier to curl up on the sofa and take a nap, but if you want to be a witch, you need to go out and take that class on magick or Tarot or essential oils. Focus your energies and muster the willpower to make yourself do it. Lots of people want to do it, but wanting isn't enough. You have to act on that want.

And willpower comes into play with your ritual as well. You will need willpower to make sure you say a devotion to the God and Goddess each night before you go to bed. You'll also need to exert your will to keep ritual special. The first time you take a ritual bath it will be fun. The fifth and sixth time will also probably be fun, but after awhile you might begin to take shortcuts; say, when you reach your 132nd bath .... It's not easy, and it involves work.

You'll also need willpower when it comes to magickal tools. Don't run out there and buy all the magickal stuff you see. Wait until you have some real knowledge before you take a serious shopping trip.

Resist the temptation to give up without having really tried. Yes, being a witch is a challenge, but challenges have their own rewards. And the more accustomed you become to facing and meeting challenges, the more you will feel able to do so. Think of it as if it were an exercise. The first day you decide to go running, you wouldn't force yourself to enter a marathon. You'd start with a short distance, right? So start yourself on the Wiccan path slowly. Don't expect instant change. Remember that real magick takes time.

... To Make a Change in the World

Witches are strong-willed leaders who keep at it. As a leader in your community, you will inspire your neighbors to care for the earth and take on community projects, as well. Sometimes it takes a witch to grab the broom by the handle and get things started.

... To Stand Firm in Your Beliefs

Some people, when they find out that you are a witch, will try to save your soul. They could very well talk about you behind your back, ridicule you, and even fear you. Some of these people may be individuals you had counted as your friends. It can be very difficult when people are questioning your beliefs all the time. What makes matters worse, many of your questioners will be angry with you because they don't understand what you are doing.

People may challenge you by quoting from their religious texts. When they do this, you need to exercise your will to stay calm and firm in your beliefs. Don't let others deter you from your path. But you also don't want to lose your temper. Be kind and gentle, but stick to your guns. (If you find yourself getting angry, look inward at the source of your feelings. You may want to spend some time journaling or meditating on the issues that come up for you.) Be patient with those who doubt you, and be patient with yourself.

To Keep Silent ...

We have reached the fourth and final level of the witches' pyramid. When practicing magick, witches keep mum about what they have done. You should never brag about how effective your magickal workings have been. Many witches think this is often the hardest part. During the process of becoming a witch, silence is still golden.

... And Walk the Walk

You've probably heard the expression, "If you're going to talk the talk, you have to walk the walk." Well, in the Craft it is better to just walk the walk and not talk the talk. As Denise likes to say, "Be a witch by example." Others say, do your good works in the public realm, but don't brag about what you have done. Your good actions will serve as an example to others who then may decide to do good works or even investigate the Wiccan path for themselves.

... To Listen and Learn

If you talk too much, chances are you are not really listening. And listening is the best way to learn. Any witch who feels he or she knows everything is his or her own worst enemy. There is always someone who knows more than you do about a given subject. You can feel proud of what you have learned, but don't be a show-off. You also don't want to babble about Craft subjects to nonwitches. Doing so could be construed as *proselytizing.*

You should discuss the Craft and what you know only when you are working with your teacher or when you yourself are teaching. You can also talk about your knowledge if someone asks you a question. You should speak in a gentle and nurturing manner, and remember that yours is not the only answer. Within the tenets of Wicca there is only one hard-and-fast rule, "An it harm none, do what ye will." There are many ways to honor this law. There is no one right answer. Each individual must find his or her own truth.

def•i•ni•tion

To **proselytize** means to convert someone from one belief to another. However fervently you believe in Wicca, it is not okay to try to change someone else's mind. If it is meant to be, people will come to Wicca when the time is right.

The Microcosm—Your Magick

We've talked about the larger applications of the witches' pyramid. Now, we'll look at how you can use this idea when preparing to do a spell. By now you probably get that before you cast your spell, you'll want to make sure you fulfill all the conditions of the witches' pyramid. You can also use the pyramid as a way to help you organize all the parts of your spell and record them in your Book of Shadows. In the example here, you can use some, just a few, or all of the ingredients and factors listed. And, when casting your spell, feel free to speak some of the words written here, or write your own chant or incantation.

Protection Spell Using the Witches' Pyramid

I know ... correspondences for protection:

- Flower: Carnation
- Herb: Comfrey
- Incense: Dragon's Blood

- Stone: Onyx
- Phase of the Moon: Waning or Full
- Sign Moon is in: Leo (or another Fire sign)
- Time of day: Noon

I will ... the existence of a protective bubble of energy around me.

You can say the words above, and then envision the bubble. See it surround you. Visualize your bubble deflecting any negative energy that may come toward you.

I dare ... to incorporate all my knowledge to create this spell of protection.

You can say the words above while you gather all your ingredients together. Place them in a small bag to form a power bundle. Then hang the bundle on your door. Each time you walk through the door and pass by your protective power bundle, remind yourself that you dare—you dare to go forth into the world with your magick.

I keep silent ... and I don't brag about or advertise my magickal workings.

Spells, like flower bulbs or newly planted seeds, do their early growing in the dark. So, let them grow and start to work in silence.

The Least You Need to Know

- The magick of becoming a witch requires that you know a lot. You must study and learn about your new responsibilities.
- Becoming a witch takes guts. You may have to confront frightening or unpleasant aspects about yourself, your family, and your community.
- Choosing the path of the witch takes willpower, because Wicca is not the easy road. Creating real change takes real effort.
- Bragging or showing off your knowledge of the Craft is not only uncool, it is counterproductive. The point is not to look or act different, but to create change for the better.
- When doing magick, you can use the witches' pyramid to help you organize all the parts of your spell.

Chapter 20

Magick's Astrological Correspondences

In This Chapter

- What does astrology have to do with magick?
- The signs and the planets—different forms of energy
- The Moon and your Wiccan ritual
- Ritual and the planets

When you practice magick, you need to be aware of what is going on around you. And that includes what is happening in the stars. Remember that phrase, "As above, so below"? So let's look at the sky and get an idea of what is going on up there.

You may know a little about astrology. You probably know your Sun sign. Maybe you check your horoscope in the paper on a regular basis. But there is more to astrology than the 12 signs of the zodiac. As a witch, you'll want to familiarize yourself with astrology and you'll probably want to have your chart drawn up by a professional astrologer. Astrology will help you to understand yourself—your potentials and challenges—and the people and energies that surround you.

A Witch's Calendar

Because the Wiccan holidays occur on days of actual astronomical events—the full Moon, the solstices, and the equinoxes, for example—most witches pay attention to the stars. Commercially available witches' calendars track these important events. They also record the movement of the planets through the twelve signs of the zodiac. You probably know that the Sun's position in the sky at the time you were born determines your Sun or zodiac sign. But did you know that there is also an Element associated with your date of birth? Find your birth date, your Sun sign, and the Element associated with your sign on the following chart.

Date	Sign	Element
March 21–April 20	Aries ♈	Fire
April 20–May 21	Taurus ♉	Earth
May 21–June 22	Gemini ♊	Air
June 22–July 23	Cancer ♋	Water
July 23–August 22	Leo ♌	Fire
August 22–September 22	Virgo ♍	Earth
September 22–October 23	Libra ♎	Air
October 23–November 22	Scorpio ♏	Water
November 22–December 22	Sagittarius ♐	Fire
December 22–January 21	Capricorn ♑	Earth
January 21–February 19	Aquarius ♒	Air
February 19–March 21	Pisces ♓	Water

The Element of your sign can help you understand your sign better. And, of course, you can learn more about the energy of a given period of time by considering the prevailing sign and its Element.

Planets, Their Symbols, and Energies

The planets, in which group we will include the Sun and the Moon, represent various energies. In your birth chart, the planets describe your desires, soul, will, vitality, and your mental and emotional nature. They also represent the people in your life. Here are the planets with their symbols and energies.

The Planets and Their Symbols	Energies
Sun ☉	Self, creativity, life spirit, willpower
Moon ☽	Emotions, subconscious, instinct, memories
Mercury ☿	Communication, mental activity, intelligence
Venus ♀	Love, beauty, art, sociability, harmony, money, resources
Mars ♂	Action, desire, courage, physical energy, ego
Jupiter ♃	Abundance, luck, wisdom, learning, philosophy, exploration, growth
Saturn ♄	Responsibilities, limitations, perseverance, discipline, structure
Uranus ♅	Change, originality, radicalism, liberation, the unexpected, intuition
Neptune ♆	Idealism, spirituality, intuition, clairvoyance, subconscious
Pluto ♇	Regeneration, destruction, rebirth, transformation, power

When preparing to do magick, you may decide you want to pull on the energy of a certain planet. The planet might be one that has special significance in your chart, or it might represent the particular energies you'd like to have help you on a given day. Before you call on a planet, be sure you know all you can about that planet's energy. You also should know where in the sky the planet will be located on the day you plan to do ritual.

Zodiac Signs and Their Planetary Rulers

Each sign of the zodiac is ruled by a planet (or two). One way to determine which planets have significance for you or the spell you want to cast is to look at the planetary rulers. Here are the signs and their planetary rulers.

Zodiac Sign	Planetary Ruler(s)
Aries ♈	Mars ♂ and Pluto ♇
Taurus ♉	Venus ♀
Gemini ♊	Mercury ☿
Cancer ♋	Moon ☽
Leo ♌	Sun ☉
Virgo ♍	Mercury ☿
Libra ♎	Venus ♀
Scorpio ♏	Pluto ♇ and Mars ♂
Sagittarius ♐	Jupiter ♃
Capricorn ♑	Saturn ♄
Aquarius ♒	Uranus ♅ and Saturn ♄
Pisces ♓	Neptune ♆ and Jupiter ♃

A sign shares certain characteristics with its ruler. For instance, Libras are usually concerned with harmony and balance and so, too, is Venus, the planetary ruler of Libra. As we noted earlier, Libra is an Air sign. While Libra shares some traits with Taurus, which is also ruled by Venus, Libra embraces these traits in an Airy way—through ideas, communication, and mental abilities—while Taurus, as an Earth sign, remains more physical and grounded.

Some signs have more than one planetary ruler. Both Pluto and Mars, for instance, rule Scorpio. People born under the sign of Scorpio tend to exhibit characteristics of Pluto—the planet of power, destruction, and regeneration—and of Mars—the planet of physical energy, boldness, and warrior ways.

Lunar Correspondences for Wiccan Rituals

When planning ritual, in addition to paying attention to the phase of the Moon (waxing, waning, new, or full), you also want to look at what sign the Moon is in. Because the Moon travels around the earth quite fast, the Moon usually passes through all the signs of the zodiac in one month. That means that in a given month, the Moon spends a day or so in each sign. Each sign the Moon passes through has a different vibe, and that energy will affect your ritual. If you know the Moon's sign, you can plan your ritual so that lunar energy aids you in your endeavors. (For more about the energies associated with each sign of the zodiac, see Chapter 21.)

- **Moon in Aries** ♈ Energy and ideas abound under this Fire sign. A great time to start new things. Also great for leadership, willpower, and spiritual conversions.
- **Moon in Taurus** ♉ A dependable, steady energy emanates from this Earth sign. A great time for dealing with issues of love, money, abundance, and material goods.
- **Moon in Gemini** ♊ A quickly moving force describes the energy of this Air sign. Super for communication, writing, and travel.
- **Moon in Cancer** ♋ This Water sign has a nurturing energy. A great time for looking at issues centering on your home, domestic life, and emotional support network.
- **Moon in Leo** ♌ Courage and power are what this Fire sign is all about. An excellent time for working on acting, self presentation, and fertility. Also a good time to increase your own power and courage.
- **Moon in Virgo** ♍ A focused energy prevails under this Earth sign. A great time to start self-improvement projects. Also a good time for working on issues related to the intellect, employment, health, and anything involving details.
- **Moon in Libra** ♎ The energy of this Air sign is one of balance. The best time for issues of emotional balance, artistic expression, karma, and justice. Also good for spiritual work.
- **Moon in Scorpio** ♏ This Water sign holds the energy of desire and transformation. A good time for change, sex and sexual fantasies, and psychic growth.
- **Moon in Sagittarius** ♐ The energy of this Fire sign is one of exploration. Great for ferreting out the truth, legal matters, and publishing enterprises.
- **Moon in Capricorn** ♑ This Earth sign carries an energy of achievement. Perfect for working on issues involving your career, organization, political matters, and recognition.
- **Moon in Aquarius** ♒ This Air sign is all about revolution. A fabulous time for creativity, problem-solving, or any issue that involves freedom. Also good for cultivating psychic abilities and friendships.
- **Moon in Pisces** ♓ The energy of this Water sign is one of compassion. A great time for healing, working with dreams, clairvoyance, or telepathy. Also a good vibe for musical projects.

Void of Course Moon

As the Moon travels around the earth through the signs of the zodiac, it "goes void" between each sign. The period between the times when the Moon leaves one sign and enters the next one is called the Void of Course Moon. During this time, it's as if the Moon were in a tunnel. Much the way you lose the station you were listening to on your car radio when you drive through a tunnel, the Moon's energies don't do what they usually do. The Void of Course Moon or Moon Void period is best for nonmaterial, passive activities—play, yoga, psychotherapy, prayer, mediation, and sleep. While you can do ritual at this time, this is not a good time to start on magickal workings. It's also not a good time to make decisions, start a business, or buy things.

Planetary Positions for Wiccan Rituals

When you're preparing to do ritual, besides noting the position of the Moon, you want to be aware of the positions of the planets. Ideally, you'll plan your ritual so that the natural planetary energies in the atmosphere will help your work. To keep track of the location of the planets, you'll probably want to buy a witches' calendar.

Figuring out the best time for your ritual and magickal workings is a bit like doing word problems. Say you wanted to work some magick to improve communication between you and your lover. You decide you want to work with Mercury, the planet of communication. You might want to plan your ritual for a time when Mercury is in Taurus, a sign ruled by Venus, the planet of love. There are many different ways to work with the planets as they move through the signs of the zodiac. We'll give you some examples, but make sure to keep records of ritual you do. Fill out a Magickal Record each time you work (see Appendix B), and you will start to see what works best for you.

- **The Sun ☉** The energy of the Sun is the most powerful of all the "planets." So, you may want to start new things when the Sun is in Aries, the first sign and the sign of fresh beginnings. Of course, you can start a project at other times, but spring is a great time for new work. Be aware of the energy found under each sign of the zodiac, and do what feels right for your magick.
- **The Moon ☽** The second major influence on the energies that you feel here on Earth, which we discussed earlier in this chapter. Initially, you'll want to really focus on only the Moon and the Sun. Looking at lunar and solar energy combined can help you pinpoint the timing of your spells. For example, if the

Sun is in Libra and the Moon is in Cancer, it could be a good time for magick to nurture your sense of balance or to balance your nurturing energies.

- **Mercury** ☿ The planet of communication, thinking, logic, reason, intelligence, and education. When Mercury is *retrograde*, which happens three times a year for periods of about three weeks each, communications go awry and travel plans meet with obstacles. Because much of magick is about communication, the Mercury retrograde period is a good time to take a break from spellcasting. Use this time to reflect, reconsider, and review your magickal workings.

def•i•ni•tion

A planet is **retrograde** when it appears to move backward in the sky. Of course, the planet does not move backward. It just looks that way as viewed from Earth. All the true planets have retrograde periods. (The Sun and the Moon do not.) Because Mercury is fairly close to Earth, its retrograde period has a big impact down here. When a planet is retrograde, its energy is reversed, reconsidered, or turned inward.

- **Venus** ♀ The planet of love, harmony, and balance. Want to add some enthusiasm to your love life? Try working on that area when Venus is in Aries, the sign of new beginnings and fresh energy. The Venus retrograde period is a great time to reconsider your relationship and material needs.
- **Mars** ♂ The planet of action, desire, courage, physical energy, and ego. The Mars retrograde period is a good time to sit back, look at your motivations, and develop new strategies for dealing with your issues, especially those around anger.
- **Jupiter** ♃ The planet of abundance, luck, wisdom, learning, philosophy, exploration, and growth. The Jupiter retrograde period is best used for internal growth and preparation. Concentrate on developing your self so you can benefit from the opportunities offered to you.
- **Saturn** ♄ The planet of responsibility, limits, control, discipline, and structure. During a Saturn retrograde, work to become aware of your own power and examine how you fit into society. To what extent are you letting societal rules limit you and your potential?
- **Uranus** ♅ The planet of change, originality, radicalism, liberation, the unexpected, and intuition. The Uranus retrograde period is a time to look at the role you are playing in making the world a better place.

- **Neptune** ♆ The planet of idealism, spirituality, intuition, clairvoyance, and the subconscious. The retrograde period is best spent tuning in to the collective unconscious. How are your fears, illusions, and spiritual development connected to the situation of humanity at large?
- **Pluto** ♇ The planet of regeneration, destruction, rebirth, transformation, and power. The retrograde period is a time to look at how you are contributing to the evolution of humankind and the earth. Try to become more conscious of how you impact the earth and all of her creatures.

Planetary Rulership of Hours

Now you know about Sun signs, the impact of the Moon in the various signs, and the movement of the planets. There's even a way to determine what hour of the day is best for your magick. As you may know, different days of the week are associated with different planets. And in fact, the ancients decided that there should be seven days in a week because that was how many planets they could see. Each day is named after one of these seven.

Here are the days of the week and the planets that rule them. In some cases, if you look at the Spanish names for the days, it's easier to see which planet rules which day.

Day of the Week	Ruling Planet
Sunday	Sun ☉
Monday (*lunes* in Spanish, like lunar)	Moon ☽
Tuesday (*martes* in Spanish)	Mars ♂
Wednesday (*miércoles* in Spanish)	Mercury ☿
Thursday (*jueves* in Spanish)	Jupiter ♃
Friday (*viernes* in Spanish)	Venus ♀
Saturday	Saturn ♄

And on each day, every hour also has its own planetary rulership. The planet whose day it is rules the first hour of that day. In other words, the Sun, the planet of Sunday, rules the first hour after sunrise of Sunday; and the Moon, the planet of Monday, rules the first hour after sunrise of Monday, and so on. The remaining 23 hours in each day are ruled by different planets throughout the day. The following table

details all of the hours of the week and the planets that rule them. Note that in this system there are 12 hours between sunrise and sunset. This means that each daylight "hour" is actually shorter than a real 60-minute hour. Each hour here is 1/12 of the time between sunrise and sunset.

Planetary Rulership of the Hours

Hours	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
1 (sunrise)	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn
2	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter
3	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars
4	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun
5	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus
6 (midday)	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury
7	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon
8	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn
9	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter
10	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars
11	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun
12	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus
1 (sunset)	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury
2	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon
3	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn
4	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter
5	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars
6 (midnight)	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun
7	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus
8	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury
9	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon
10	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn
11	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter
12	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars

Say you were planning some candle magick to help you feel more attractive. You might want to light that candle on Friday, the day of Venus. Or you could light the candle at the hour of Venus on another day, or, to increase the Venus energy, you could light the candle at the hour of Venus on Friday. If you wanted to communicate your love better, you could light a candle on Wednesday, the day of Mercury (the planet of communication) at the hour of Venus.

If you're fascinated by all this, you might enjoy *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Astrology, Fourth Edition*, by Madeline Gerwick-Brodeur and Lisa Lenard (see Appendix A). It is chock-full of everything you need to know about the planets and their movements.

The Least You Need to Know

- Astrology is a great way to learn about yourself and the energies around you.
- Each zodiac sign is associated with an Element and a planet (and in some cases two). The planet is the ruler of its sign. A sign, its ruler, and its Element share energy.
- With a little knowledge of astrology, you can work your magick at times when the stars can help you achieve your goals.
- Astrology can even help you pick the hour to begin ritual for a given purpose.

Chapter 21

Magickal Timing

In This Chapter

- The energies of different times of day
- The energy of the days of the week
- The seasons and their energies
- Timing and the Elements
- Quick fixes?

There is a right time for every action. After reading the last chapter, you know about the major astrological issues involved in choosing when to do ritual and magick. But there's more …

If you coordinate your magick with the optimum time of day, position of the planets, and season, you can make it stronger. Of course, you don't have to make elaborate plans. You can use magick in an emergency with little or no planning and you'll probably still get results.

When there is something important coming up in your life (and you have tried all the mundane solutions at your disposal), why not plan ahead and give your magick an energy boost? All you have to do is select a good time for the kind of magick you plan to do. Make sure that you write down

what you've done and the circumstances under which you've done it so you can compare magick that has been planned to what happens when you don't plan.

Magick All Day Long

Different parts of the day have different energies, and you'll need to consider the inherent energy that surrounds us at these various times. Remember that you can do your magick any time you want. So if you are not free to practice ritual at 2 A.M. on a Wednesday during the full Moon, when the time might be perfect for your new spell, don't worry. However, your magick will be even more effective if you do your workings at the time of day that is most conducive to the energies you are using. The great thing about working with daily magickal timing is that you'll always get another chance tomorrow.

Morning Magick: Sunrise

The Sun is up. The birds are singing. Doesn't this seem like a good time to start something? Well, it is! Even if you are a late sleeper, you are fresher in the morning when you first get up, and so is your energy. You can channel that extra energy into your magick and start something new with the new day.

So Mote It Be

Most people start their diets in the morning. So to help yourself reach your goals, why not do magick when you first get up, and have an empty stomach? Do this when the Moon is waning, and you'll have the willpower to get rid of the weight.

This is also a great time to get rid of any negativity that might be hanging around you from the previous day. If you've had a fight with a spouse or a lover and gone to bed mad, or have run into aggravating issues at work, now is a good time to chase away those bad feelings so you can start your day with a clean slate.

First thing in the morning is also a good time to work with addictive behaviors and bad habits. For example, if you overeat compulsively, you could do a spell in the morning to have a binge-free day.

The start of the day is also good for magick having to do with business, school, or anything else that gears up in the morning. You might want to work with employment issues—getting a job, receiving that raise or promotion—early in the day. If you're looking for a job, magick at this time could help hook you up with the people who have the right job for you.

Midday Magick: Sunshine

During the middle of the day the Sun is at its strongest. This is a good time to call on that strength. You might want to work on overcoming a weakness that you have, and the energy of the Sun can help you to do just that. Most people take a break from working in the middle of the day. This is a great time to reset yourself. Have some lunch and do some magick to help you see the project of the day through. This is also a great time to ask for guidance or inspiration to rethink something that needs to be started all over again. Do some magick for the success of your project at noon, and you'll know that this time you are on the right track.

Evening Magick: Crepuscular Light

The light of the Sun fades in the sky and evening is drawing nigh. You might get home feeling tired and cranky from your long day. Although lots of people come home and have a drink or raid the refrigerator, why not arrive home, take a hot shower, and do ritual instead? This is a great time to do magick to break up routines or banish bad habits. If you do ritual one night when you come home, it may stop you from eating that bag of chips. And the next night you'll be more likely to reach for a piece of fruit. This is a great time to work magick to boost your willpower, to help you relax, and to give yourself calmness and serenity.

Webweaving

You can find accurate times for sunrise, sunset, moonrise, and moonset for any day of the year on the U.S. Naval Observatory's website. Check it out at aa.usno.navy.mil/data/docs/RS_OneDay.html.

Nighttime Magick: Resonating in Tune

After the Sun has set, we are better able to feel the energy of the Moon and the Goddess. This is a great time for divination and working with psychic energies. You might also want to work with issues involving love, lust, or beauty. And of course, this is a good time to reflect on what has happened during the day. By the time you reach night, you may be pretty fed up with your work, school, or family. Doing magick at this time can help you remember that things are not always the way they appear. Getting some clarity on the events of your day can help you to banish the negativity around you. That way you can start the cycle again in the morning with a fresh outlook and renewed energy.

Try not to stay up very late doing divination when you need to get up early the next morning. Nighttime may be a great time for looking into the future and tapping into your psychic energy, but even witches need sleep. And remember—you can do your magick at any time.

Magick All Week Long

You can also look at the cycle of the week when planning your magick. Remember in the previous chapter we talked about each day of the week being named for a different planet? Well, the days of the week also have genders based on their planetary associations. You'll want to keep this in mind, too, when planning the optimum time for your magickal workings.

Sunday (Sun ☉) Magick

The energy of *Sunday*, which is named for the Sun, is male. Sunday is the best day of the week to work with issues involving fathers and other authority figures. Sundays are great for working on questions of leadership, money, prosperity, and power. They are also good days to focus on health, vitality, energy, and happiness.

Monday (Moon ☽) Magick

The energy of *Monday* is associated with the Moon and is female. This is a great day to work with Moon energy, so you might want to do divination. This is a good time to focus on issues involving mothers, nurturing, fertility, and growth. Monday is also a good time to work for clarity, beauty, or help with women's issues.

Tuesday (Mars ♂) Magick

Tuesdays are full of the male energy of Mars. This energy is one of courage, success, and lust. This is a good time to give attention to issues dealing with violence, competition, conflict, or survival. Tuesdays are also good for questions of money, endurance, and leadership.

Wednesday (Mercury ☿) Magick

Wednesday is named for Mercury, a planet with male energy. This is a great day for working with communications, thought, self-expression, wisdom, and the arts. The

energy of Mercury will also aid magick having to do with issues of addiction and psychology. Wednesdays are also good days to do divination.

Thursday (Jupiter ♃) Magick

The male energy of Jupiter prevails on *Thursdays*. This energy is conducive to growth and expansion, business, prosperity, abundance, success, and health. Thursdays are also great times to focus your magick on the big issues in your life.

Friday (Venus ♀) Magick

Friday is associated with Venus and has female energy. Fridays are great days for workings having to do with love, beauty, and romance. The Venus energy of Fridays will also aid magick involving healing, protection, loyalty, fidelity, trustworthiness, and women's issues.

def•i•ni•tion

The name **Tuesday** comes from the Germanic God Tiu. Tiu, like the Roman God Mars and the planet Mars, is associated with war. **Wednesday** comes from the Old English name "Woden's Day." This name was a direct translation of the Latin term ***mercurii dies,*** "day of (the God and planet) Mercury." When they translated the name, they also translated the God into one to which local people could relate. **Thursday** comes from the Old English and Old Norse for "Thor's day," a translation of the Latin name that meant "Jupiter's day." **Friday** comes from the Old English name Frigedaeg, which is derived from the name of the Norse Goddess Frigg, who, like both the planet and the Goddess Venus, is associated with love.

Saturday (Saturn ♄) Magick

The Saturn energy of Saturday is female. This is a good day to work with divination and psychic abilities. Saturn energies will aid magick concerning the elderly, illness, death, and end-of-life issues. Saturday is also a good day to do binding spells and to deal with constrictions, limitations, or infidelity.

Magick by the Season

You can also work with the energies of each season—the freshness of spring, heat of summer, preparations of autumn, and the turning inward of winter. The change in energy as we progress through the seasons is probably familiar to you. Who hasn't noticed the fresh, new quality of spring or the hunkering down we experience in winter?

If you want to get even more specific about the energies that are in the air during different times of the year, you can take the signs of the zodiac into account as well. (To pinpoint the exact moment when we switch from one sign of the zodiac to another, consult an almanac or a witches' calendar.) One of the neat things about working with the signs is that you can buy (or mix) essential oils that represent the energy of each sign. For instance, if you have decided to work with the calm, dependable energy of Taurus during the month of Taurus, you might want to do some candle magick and anoint your candle with Taurus oil. And don't forget the Moon will be moving through all of the signs of the zodiac during the month as well.

Spring: Bring Forth New Life

Just as trees unfurl new buds in the spring, you'll want to start on new projects, too. Spring is a great time to do magick dealing with issues concerning new projects and new beginnings. You might want to try using powders to do Air magick at this time of year to take advantage of gusting spring winds. This is also a great time to do divination to see what is going to happen in the new season. The energies of spring will help you bring love toward you and will enhance any new project. If you're thinking of selling your house, this is a good time to make plans to do so.

So Mote It Be

Spring, of course, is a time of fertility and planting. If you are growing a magickal garden, now is the time to prepare the soil and get ready for planting. Because it is the planting season, this is also a great time for Earth magick. You can double your magickal effect by putting your magickal energy into some seeds and planting them. The magickal energy with which you have infused the seeds will help them to grow, and when they burst forth with life, your magickal intent will manifest as well.

Summer: Strong and Sure

The energies of summer are strong and sure, just like the Sun in the sky. These energies can enhance magick dealing with beauty, healing, health, and nurturing. This is a great time to do workings concerning a project that you've had to restart. You'll also find that the energies are right to nurture a love affair that you have already begun. The energies of summer can bring strength and endurance.

Autumn: Accumulating and Taking Stock

In autumn, squirrels gather food for the winter. They need to accumulate food so they have enough to ensure their survival. For humans, this is a good time for similar activities—workings regarding possessions, money, prosperity, durability, survival, and employment. This is a great time to focus on what you have and how to enhance it. The energies of autumn are also associated with issues of spirituality, relationships, and family. If you have troubles in any of these areas, healing magick during the autumn could be particularly effective. Autumn is also a time to take care of any remaining tasks from projects you have already started. You should get ready for closure.

Winter: Nurturing Within

Winter is a time when we naturally turn within. It's cold out there, so what better time to stay inside and reflect? This is a great time for meditation, divination, and working with past lives. You could also deal with banishing and issues having to do with survival and death. This is a great time to do some Nature magick to help the animals that live near you. Send your magick out so that they find the food they need to survive. You could also do some magick for your own prosperity so that you can be sure you have enough to share with others in need. Or you could work on sharing your energy and enthusiasm by volunteering for a community project.

Timing Elemental Energies

You've read quite a bit about the Elements and are probably starting to get a good feel for their energies. In addition to being associated with a direction and a color, each Element, as we noted in Chapter 20, is associated with three astrological signs.

Air Time

Gemini, Libra, and Aquarius are the Air signs of the Zodiac. When we are under an Air sign, you may want to do Air magick. One way to do this is to take a piece of paper in a color that corresponds with your magickal intent. Write your intent on the center of the paper, place 1 tablespoon of an appropriate incense in the center of the paper, bring up the corners, and tie them together with a piece of cord in an appropriate color. Then burn the packet of incense. Use a feather to fan the smoke and help send your intent through the Air and off to Spirit.

Webweaving

Witches and astrologers are not the only people to keep an eye on the movements of the heavenly bodies. The *Old Farmer's Almanac*, which has been published every year since 1792, records and predicts astronomical events. The *Almanac* even provides tables that list good days for planting, giving up smoking, going to the dentist, and getting a haircut—all based on which sign the Moon is in.

- **Gemini ♊ : May 21–June 22** Symbolized by the Twins, Gemini has an amusing, witty quality. You might want to tap into that vibe and bring more humor into your life. Gemini energy is also concerned with communication, writing, knowledge, information, consistency, patience, focus, flexibility, motion, and travel. This would be a great time to work magick to learn something new, facilitate communication, travel, and to change—especially your mind.
- **Libra ♎ : September 22–October 23** Symbolized by the Scales, Libra is concerned with balance, harmony, and justice. This period is also a good time to work magick concerning charms, compassion, art, fairness, anger, dishonesty, indecisiveness, ambivalence, fickleness, diplomacy, culture, cooperation, and idealism. You might want to use your workings to establish cordial relations with someone from who you have been estranged. This is also a great month for magick that has to do with mental energy, idealism, spirituality, love relationships, and issues of friendship and popularity.
- **Aquarius ♒ : January 21–February 19** The energy of Aquarius, which is symbolized by the Water Bearer, is inventive, creative, and original. This is a great time to do something different, maybe even something revolutionary. Aquarius energies will help you bring something to light so that it is obvious. You might want to use this renegade energy to make a statement or take a stand on an issue. This is also a great month for humanitarian projects. So maybe you'll use the psychic abilities this month fosters to come up with a revolutionary solution to the problems of homelessness and hunger in your community.

Aquarius energy will help you with issues involving idealism, individuality, open-mindedness, originality, science, detachment, inflexibility, repression, logic, unpredictability, temperament, tolerance, and innovation.

Fire Time

Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius are the Fire signs. During these periods, you may want to use candle magick. Anoint the appropriate color candle with an oil such as Aries, Leo, or Sagittarius oil, place your intent into the candle, and build your cone of power with a chant you design for the magick you intend. Use that fiery energy to get your magickal plans off to a blazing start!

- **Aries ♈ : March 21–April 20** Symbolized by the Ram, Aries says, "Charge ahead and start that new project now!" Aries energy will help you do it. This is also a good time to work magick around issues of creativity, anger, independence, new beginnings, self-awareness, taking action, patience, intolerance, putting others before yourself, and following through projects to completion. You also may want to focus your magick on issues involving leadership, assertiveness, aggression, and enthusiasm.
- **Leo ♌ : July 23–August 22** Symbolized by the Lion, Leo is all about courage, showmanship, creativity, fertility, and willpower. You might want to do magick to enhance your leadership skills or to become the leader of a group. Leo energy will also help you with issues involving fun, power, inspiration, influence, dignity, pride, arrogance, conceit, laziness, insecurities, self-indulgence, status, generosity, ambition, pride, physical appearance, drama, and being in the spotlight. Yes, Leo, it is time for your close-up!
- **Sagittarius ♐ : November 22–December 22** Symbolized by the Archer, Sagittarius energy is about enthusiasm, exploration, freedom, independence, and fun. This is a great time to work magick to free yourself of the things that bind you—addictions, bad habits, objects that you don't need. You could also look at questions involving truth, honesty, optimism, philosophy, legal matters, generosity, humor, intuition, inspiration, travel, visualization, temper, patience, procrastination, realism, responsibility, restlessness, and publishing. Or tap into the fun vibe and do some magick to have a really good time.

So Mote It Be

You can try this in winter because it's a good time for meditation, or at any other time of the year. Get a deck of Tarot cards and check the astrological correspondences of each card of the Major Arcana. Find the cards that correspond to the current sign of the zodiac. Shuffle them and pick one. Study the image on the card. Meditate on it, and see what it can teach you about the issues in your life or about any situation that comes up for you during the month.

Water Time

Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces are the Water signs. During these time periods, you may want to perform Water magic. You could do this by taking a magickal bath and infusing yourself with the energies that you wish to obtain. Or you could use your magickal bath to wash away any energies that you wish to banish.

- **Cancer ♋ : June 22–July 23** You can use the nurturing energies of Cancer, which is symbolized by the Crab, to work magick having to do with your home, warmth, family, and family relations. This is also a good time to look at issues involving feelings, sensitivity, memory, intuition, loyalty, protectiveness, sentimentality, sympathy, possessiveness, insecurities, manipulation, and giving of the self. You might want to work magick to allow you to give of yourself more freely, or you could do magick for someone else (with that person's permission, of course). Activity in this vein could help bring your family together or build a strong team or support network.
- **Scorpio ♏ : October 23–November 22** You can use the energy of Scorpio, symbolized by the Scorpion, to effect change in the areas of your life involving sexuality, desire, and power. This is another good time to work on issues of leadership. You also could look at the profound questions—life, death, birth, sex, and transformation. Scorpio energy is also conducive to developing psychic awareness, and issues involving determination, emotions, passion, regeneration, willpower, trust, jealousy, secrecy, self-destructive behavior, suspicion, and intolerance.
- **Pisces ♓ : February 19–March 21** Because Pisces energy, which is symbolized by the Fish, is compassionate, this is a good time for healing work of any kind. This is also a great time to work magick to develop compassion or spirituality. You might want to work with issues concerning emotions, empathy, faith, forgiveness, dreams, intuition, clairvoyance, and telepathy. Pisces energy can

also help with questions of illusion, laziness, sacrifice, sensitivity, loyalty, music, mysticism, understanding, pessimism, and self-indulgence. The month of Pisces is a great time to get in touch with your higher power.

Earth Time

Taurus, Virgo, and Capricorn are the Earth signs. Under an Earth sign, you may want to perform Earth magick to engender slow, steady growth. To do this, empower some seeds with your magickal intent, then plant them in a pot. If you plant your seeds on the first day of the astrological month, you can empower them every day of the month. When the plants burst forth, so will your magick.

- **Taurus ♉ : April 20–May 21** Taurus, which is symbolized by the Bull, is conducive to new beginnings. But the feeling is more stable and grounded than that of Aries. This is a great time to work magick concerning issues of prosperity, success, patience, beauty, friendliness, security, comfort, laziness, sensuality, greed, materialism, possessiveness, stubbornness, loyalty, comfort, peace, harmony, and dependability, and you might want to do some work on your love life. You could also work magick on some volatile issues—if you have a lot of conflict at work, for instance—and the energy of the month would help to lend stability and steadiness to your task.
- **Virgo ♍ : August 22–September 22** The vibe during the month of Virgo, which is symbolized by the Virgin, is one of service, organization, and self-improvement. This would be a good time to work magick to help you analyze and solve a problem that has been eating at you for a long time. This is also a good time to focus your magickal work on global problems and their solutions. Virgo energy will also aid you with issues concerning mental energy, discrimination, efficiency, logic, practicality, methodology, dependability, judgment, obsessions, perfection, criticism, health, employment, responsibility, and details, details, details.

Banish!

Avoid allowing feelings of being overwhelmed to stop you from doing your magick. Consider the energies that are out there waiting to help when you plan to do your magick, but know that you don't always have to do everything at the best possible time. You can do magick at any time. Sometimes we do magick when we can, and sometimes we act when we have to.

- **Capricorn ♑ : December 22–January 21** Symbolized by the Goat, Capricorn is all about ambition, achievement, and self-control. So, tap into that Capricorn vibe and reach your career goal. The energy of Capricorn is also concerned with efficiency, politics, structure, organization, responsibility, cautiousness, discipline, loyalty, commitment, reservation, responsibility, tradition, economics, domination, materialism, perfectionism, stubbornness, forgiveness, and helping others. During this time, you could do magick to allow yourself to take on the responsibility of a community service project.

Real Magick Takes Time

The type of magick that witches practice never yields immediate results on the material plane. Sorry, but that is the truth. What can happen quickly is the magickal change inside you—the feeling that you get when you practice ritual and know that your magick will happen. Often you can come away from your magickal workings with a sense of empowerment and a "spiritual high." And, well, we do think that is magick!

Real change—and that is what real magick effects—takes time. And magick will take its time. The goal you are working toward will manifest when it is supposed to. Sure, on rare occasions you will put your magick out there, and the next day the phone will ring and that ace job that you have been after will be yours. But know that you have gotten it quickly because it was the time for the job to be yours. Usually you put your magick out there and then you wait a week or two, or a month, or more.

The Least You Need to Know

- You can do the magick you need to do any time of the day, day of the week, and month of the year.
- If you want to do your magick under optimum conditions, you should consider which natural energies are in force and pick your time based on how well they correspond to your magickal purpose.
- Magickal timing involves concepts that you already understand and use to judge the energies around you. For example, spring and the morning are times of new beginning, and because of this they are good times to start new things.
- Magick takes time. You will not snap your fingers or twitch your nose and effect real change. On the other hand, when you start to practice magick you may feel the internal transformation almost immediately!

Part 6 Witches' Brew: Notions, Potions, and Powders

Do you want to learn even more about magick? Of course you do! In this final section, we provide hints, tips, and guidelines for how you can start writing your own spells. To get you started, we've written some spells for you to try. We've also designed a year-and-a-day-long calendar for you to follow as you enter into your new practice of Wicca and witchcraft.

Chapter 22

More Ways to Work Magick

In This Chapter

- Magick that's done and undone
- Light the candle or incense
- Magick of glamour and the kitchen
- What about the weather?
- Yes, more—clay, powder, paper, and flowers

In this chapter, we'll give you some specific spells to use. We'll also give you some ideas for how you can utilize still other materials in your magick. Remember, it is your magick, and your creativity is a part of it.

Magick is like a recipe; it's a pinch of this and a pinch of that, plus your intent. Magick works because you direct energy to make the desired result happen. As you know, you should always try the mundane solutions before you turn to magick. But remember, even if you do magick, you must still continue to act on the mundane plane. You'll need to stick to your diet if you want to lose weight, and you'll need to send out those resumés if you want a new job.

Poppets

Poppet magick—magick involving a specially empowered doll—is great to use for binding spells, healing, or to lose weight. Some witches shy away from poppet magick because it reminds them of the stereotyped notion of *voodoo* dolls. Others avoid poppet magick because they don't like to sew! But poppet magick is good, strong magick.

def•i•ni•tion

You've probably heard of **voodoo,** or voudou. Many of us carry a negative impression of this Afro-Caribbean religion, but we shouldn't. Healing is at the heart of voodoo, which is often described as a mixture of African ancestor reverence, Native American Earth religion, and European Catholicism. And voodoo, like Wicca, gives all women a central and powerful role.

Remember to keep any poppet you have made in a safe place. The doll you make represents the person for whom you have done the magick, so you wouldn't want anything unplanned to happen to that doll.

Let's say you want to do poppet magick to heal a sick child. First, ask the child's parents if you have their permission to do magick for their child. If so, make the poppet while inside your magick circle, and put any herbs or other magickal ingredients that you want to use inside it. While you sew the poppet up, infuse it with your intent. Then give it to the child. You can also make a poppet to safeguard the health of your pet. In such a case, you would make the poppet in the shape of your pet and keep it on your altar.

Webweaving

In England in 1609, Frances, Lady Essex, used a poppet made of wax to make her husband impotent so she could get her marriage annulled and marry Sir Robert Carr. She got to marry Carr, but in 1613 they were both imprisoned because of her magickal workings. Luckily, they were pardoned later.

What You Need for Poppet Magick

To do poppet magick, you'll need some supplies:

- Fabric in a color that corresponds to your magickal intent. (For a list of colors and their magickal associations, see Chapter 17. Or use white, which substitutes for all colors.)
- A needle and thread
- Stuffing. (You can use scraps of cloth, cotton, wool, or fiberfill.)

Then you could add some of these:

- Herbs, flowers, fruits, or vegetables that correspond to your magickal intent
- Essential oils that correspond to your magickal intent

- Crystals or stones that correspond to your magickal intent (see Chapter 18)
- A piece of cloth, hair, or fingernail clippings that belong to the person for whom you are creating the poppet, or a photograph of that person
- Amulets or talismans
- Magickal messages or symbols. (You can write these on paper or fabric and sew them into your poppet, or you can attach them to the outside.)

If you want to incorporate the Elements into your magick, you could attach, sprinkle, or stuff your poppet with the following:

- Sand to represent the Element of Earth
- Feathers to represent the Element of Air
- Incense to represent the Elements of Air and Fire
- A magickal potion to represent the Element of Water
- Saltwater to represent the Elements of Water and Earth
- Holy water to represent Water and Spirit

After you are finished making the poppet, cleanse and consecrate it by passing it through each of the Elements. Use the smoke of your incense to represent Fire and Air and a sprinkling of salt water to represent Earth and Water.

Stopping the Magick

The biggest advantage to poppet magick is that the spell is easy to undo, so it can be used for magick that is of temporary duration. If you want to stop the spell, simply take the poppet apart. If you have done a weight-loss poppet for yourself, once you have reached your goal, you dismantle the poppet so you do not continue to shed pounds.

When you undo a poppet, you can use this little chant:

With this spell I've begun,
I now wish the magick to be undone.

Be aware that the poppet represents a person (or animal) and should be treated gently and stored where it will be safe and secure. You never burn a poppet. If you want to work with the Element of Fire, you can try candle magick instead. In addition, you

should make sure that the place you store your poppet is safe. The kids shouldn't play with it, and neither should the dog get his teeth into it. Put the poppet away until the magick manifests. Once the magick has come to pass, take the poppet apart and bury the pieces.

Candle Magick and Incense Magick

You can use candle magick and incense magick for just about any magickal purpose. You need to charge your candle or incense with your magickal intent before you light it. Then, when you do light it, you're sending out your magick. See the magick rising toward the Gods. You can help send the magick upward by using a feather as a fan.

What You Need for Candle Magick

Candles come in lots of shapes, sizes, and colors. You can buy a candle in the form of a cat, angel, devil, skull, cross, or human. You can also get candles that have knobs, candles that burn for seven days, bicolored candles, multicolored candles, floating candles, and ones that are one color on the inside and another color outside.

Here's what you'll need for your candle magick:

- A candle in a color that corresponds to your magickal intent
- A small pointed crystal or your bolline (magick knife used for cutting physical objects)
- An essential oil that corresponds to your magickal intent
- Herbs that correspond to your magickal intent
- A mortar and pestle
- A candle holder

To do a candle spell to bring yourself money, use your crystal or bolline to carve your desire on the candle. It's nice to use a crystal because the crystal itself will also pull in energy and infuse the candle with added magickal power. Be specific about what you write on the candle. And remember: be careful what you wish for, because you just might get it.

Then dress the candle with a magickal oil. When doing candle magick to bring something to them, many witches use this candle-dressing method. Hold the candle so that one end faces you. Start applying oil to the candle from the middle and move

your hand toward you. Then turn the candle around and coat the other half by moving your hand toward you. If you were doing magick to take something away, you would coat the candle with oil by moving your hand away from you. If you make your own magickal oils, you can empower the oil with herbs that also represent the intent of your spell.

You can also load a candle with magickal herbs. To do this, hollow out the bottom of your candle. Mix your herbs with some essential oil and fill the hole with the herb and oil mixture. Concentrate on your magickal intent while you work. Seal the hole up with wax, and your loaded candle is ready to use! When the candle burns down to your herb mixture, the herbs will ignite and blast your magick out to its destination. Be extra sure that you use this candle in an area where you wont start a fire, because the herbs can flare up quite a bit. It's usually a good idea to place your loaded candle in a deep candle cup or in the bathtub to finish burning.

So Mote It Be

When you mix herbs and essential oils together, it's easiest to add the oil to the herbs, not the herbs to the oil. Drip oil on the herbs a little at a time and stir them together. If you try to add the herbs to the oil, they will just float.

A Candle Magick Spell

Here's an example of a candle magick spell, a blessing for a new or expectant mother. It's nice to do this spell at the baby shower or at a get-together to welcome the baby into the community.

The mother to be or the mother and new baby sit in the center of a circle of friends and family. Using a crystal, a bolline, or a needle, the people in the circle carve symbols of their blessings and good wishes for mother and child into a white candle. You can use tapers, which are traditional, or pillar candles, which are likely to get knocked over.

Anoint the candle with an essential oil of protection, love, and blessing. Myrrh, yarrow, or rosemary oils are all good choices.

Light the candle and place it on a central altar next to the mother and child. Have all the participants chant, directing their energy toward the candle at the center of the circle:

As this candle burns down low,
All of our good wishes glow.
All the smoke that twirls above you
Brings the blessings of those who love you.

Chant until you can feel that the energy is raised and has been funneled into the candle. At the height of the chanting, put out the candle. Then present it to the mother. She may burn her magickally charged candle at any time to bring the love and blessings of her friends to her and her new child.

Another Candle Magick Spell

After you have built your cone of power, put the energy into your candle, and lit it, you can use this all-purpose incantation to send your magick on its way:

My goal in this flame I see.
Bring my wish, my dream to me.

Webweaving

Many witches make their own incense. Some believe that the smell of homemade incense is more pleasant. One advantage is that you can mix in your magickal intent when you make it. Scott Cunningham's *The Complete Book of Incense, Oils, and Brews* (see Appendix A) contains some great recipes.

What You Need for Incense Magick

Incense magick is easy because you probably already have all the supplies you need. If you want, you can make your own incense from sawdust, herbs, and essential oils. Otherwise, you will just need the following:

- Incense in stick, cone, or powder form that corresponds with your magickal intent
- Charcoal (to burn if you are using powdered incense)
- A censer or cauldron
- A lighter

An Incense Magick Spell

For this spell, which you can use to bless and safeguard your home and yourself, you will need a stick of incense. Light your incense and say the following chant:

Smoke and ember at the door,
Bless this entrance evermore.
Bless all those who come and go.
With this sign, I make it so.

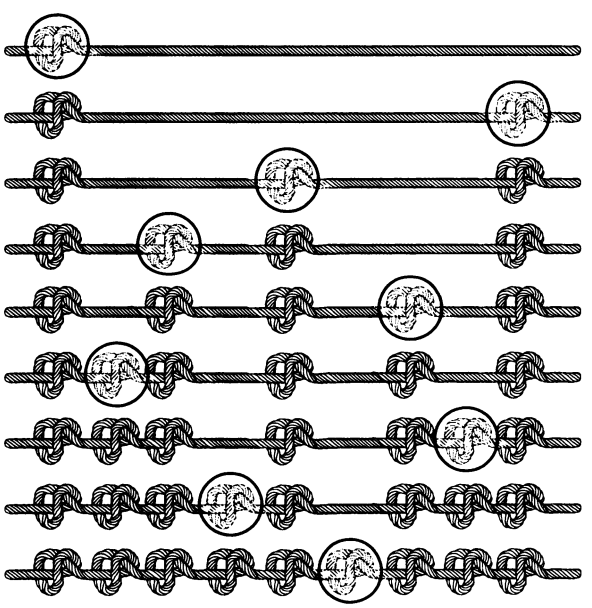
As you chant these words, draw a pentacle in the air with the stick of smoking incense. Visualize the smoke as a protective force encircling your home.

Knot Magick

To do knot magick, you need a length of string or cord. Make sure your cord is long enough to easily tie nine knots. Use a string or cord in the color that corresponds to your magickal intent. This type of magick is great for either bringing items to you or sending items away from you. Knot magick is another type of magick that is easy to undo. All you have to do is untie the knots. You could even use it for weather magick to prevent rain for a short period of time, like the day you are holding a rummage sale to support your local animal shelter. (Read more about weather magick a little later in this chapter.)

A Spell for Knot Magick

Put the energy of your magickal intent into the string or cord. Envision your magick happening, and while you do this, tie nine knots in the cord as you say your spell. With each couplet, tie another knot. Tie the first knot on one end of the string. Then tie the second knot at the other end. The third knot goes in the middle, and the fourth knot goes between the first and the third knots. Refer to the following chart to see where each knot goes.



Knot magick.

Sometimes nine-knot spells, like the one here, are called witches' ladder spells. The following spell is a general blessing. It's great to use if you are moving into a new house or life situation. If you use thick, multicolored yarn, your finished collection of knots can be used as a decoration for the wall of your home:

By knot of one, the spell's begun.
By knot of two, my magick is true.
When I tie three, I call health to me.
When I tie four, no evil comes through my door.
By knot of five, I flourish and thrive.
The magick of knot six, all my troubles soon will fix.
The seventh knot tied safe and sound
will bring good company around.
Eighth knot on the string, great wisdom will bring.
By knot of nine, success is mine.

When you're finished, place the tied-up string on the wall to bless your home. If you want this magick to be permanent, you can bury the cord in the earth or you can burn it. But we think it is better to hang on to it. If you keep your knotted cord, you can undo the magick whenever you like.

Undoing Knot Magick

With the aid of some knot magick, you've been dieting and have reached your ideal weight. Now it is time to undo the magick. Remove the knotted cord or string from its place of safekeeping. Locate the last knot you tied when you did your spell. Untie it. Then untie the next-to-last knot. Untie all the knots in the opposite order that you tied them. Refer to the preceding knot-tying chart to help you keep track. When all the knots are undone, your magick will no longer be in effect. You can chant the following over and over as you untie the knots:

With each knot that I untie,
Release the magick, let it fly.
And it harm none, set it free,
This is my will, so mote it be.

You can also use knot magick, or the untying of knots in a spell, to rid yourself of bad habits. First, while concentrating on your magickal intent, tie your cord as in the witches' ladder spell above. Then undo each knot in the reverse order, while chanting

to reinforce your magickal intent. Here's a chant you can use to break the habit of gossiping:

Where once this cord was bound and tight,
I now must set all things to right.
Now gossip has loosed its hold on me.
I loose the knot, and now I'm free.

There are at least as many spells to get rid of bad habits as there are witches. Be aware that you have kept up your habit for a reason. Before you do magick to get rid of it, take a long, hard look inside. If you quit your habit without ferreting out its root cause, your habit will still be there on a spiritual level and another (and possibly worse!) habit could very well come in to take its place.

Glamour Magick

Glamour magick can be a great way to help you (or someone else) deal with a difficult physical issue or help to improve the way you perceive yourself. Glamour magick can help you see your own inner beauty. You might want to do glamour magick for someone who has been physically scarred in an accident or verbally abused about their appearance.

To make a glamour face wash, you'll need the following ingredients:

- 1 lemon
- 1 tsp. rose water
- 1 cup water

Slice a few rounds from the lemon. Place them in a jar and add the rose water and regular water. If you like, add a stone to reinforce your magickal intent. Listen for the sound of the stone landing on the bottom of the jar. Or, to give off the idea that you not only are beautiful but serene and calm, add a pearl to the liquid mixture.

Webweaving

Many magickal craft recipes call for ingredients of equal parts. You'll find this is true for powders, essential oils, and incense. So if you just see a list of herbs with no measurements given, you can assume that you will use equal measures of each. And you can always choose the proportions according to your taste and magickal intent.

Then take the jar and charge the contents by leaving it under moonlight.

After the water has charged, splash it over your face while repeating the following affirmation:

Beauty around me,
Beauty before me,
Beauty inside of me.
I am all of that.

While you say the words, remember a time when you felt really beautiful. Tap into the feelings of that moment, and know that your beauty truly shines!

For poise, social courage, and sex appeal, try this wash:

- ½ tsp. fresh (or dried) parsley
- ½ tsp. passion flower
- 1 cup water
- 1 amethyst

Add all the ingredients to a jar and charge them in moonlight. Splash your face with this wash. Repeat an affirmation of your choosing and know that you are poised, appropriately bold, and sexy.

Kitchen Magick

Kitchen magick is magick you can practice using things from an ordinary kitchen. You can do kitchen magick by selecting culinary herbs based on their magickal properties. You can empower your ingredients as well. Or you can concentrate on putting your magickal intent into the food as you are cooking it. Remember that many ordinary fruits and vegetables have magickal correspondences as well (see Chapter 17).

Banish!

Okay, we've said it before, and we'll probably say it again: please do not eat any herbs unless you are absolutely sure they are edible. Many magickal herbs can be toxic!

Try this meal blessing to increase your sense of spirituality:

Lord and Lady, bless this food.
May it be filled with divine energy.
We take in that divinity,
and in so taking we become
the best boys and girls,
men and women we can be.

If you like to cook, you can add magick to your recipes—literally! Try making these good fortune cookies.

Prepare your favorite sugar cookie recipe. Make sure to stir the batter deosil (clockwise). Add slivered almonds to your batter and, if the idea appeals to you, a few drops of green food color. As you stir, concentrate on your magickal intent and say this:

Cookies are sweet.
Good fortune is sweet.
May I have all the sweetness that I want.

Then envision your magick coming to pass, and *bon appétit!*

Weather Magick

You can use weather magick to protect your home, family, and community from an oncoming storm. You probably won't be able to stop the storm altogether, but you should be able to keep it from doing serious damage. Be super careful when working with the weather. Remember, weather is something that affects everyone.

To lessen the impact of a storm, you must summon a tremendous amount of focus. Be aware that in all likelihood the best you can hope for is that the storm will leave a small area unscathed. To truly affect the weather, you have to connect with it. You must have a good solid memory of what it feels like to be in a storm, what it feels like when a wild wind picks up and lifts your hair.

To work your weather magick, stand outside facing the direction from which the storm is coming. Hold your hands high in the air. Focus on your intent. Yell out this chant, sending your energy toward the storm:

Winds that blow the clouds on high,
Know my home, and pass it by!

If you are interested in weather magick, practice! One way to do this is at the ocean. Stand on the beach at the water line. Focus your energy and try to direct the incoming waves to go around your feet instead of over them. It's tricky, but if you work at it, you will get better and better.

Banish!

Make doubly sure you have considered all the implications before you do weather magick. Weather affects each and every one of us not just today, but in the future as well. If it doesn't rain today, it's possible that a farmer's crops may wither and that could raise the price of wheat, which could raise the price of bread, which could mean that many people will go hungry.

You can also work on your weather magick skills by going out and paying attention. Really notice what the wind and rain (and maybe even snow) feel like. Let your body and all of your senses get in touch with a storm. The more experience you have of weather, the better you will understand it and the more success you will have in working with it.

Notions, Potions, Powders, and More

As you have probably noticed, witches use a huge variety of materials when working spells. Besides all the things we have discussed so far, you can also work with clay, potions, powders, various kinds of paper, and even flowers.

Notions of Clay

You can make your own magickal notions—talismans and amulets—with clay. If you were doing magick to bring yourself money, you could make a coin out of clay. To make the magick stronger, knead some money-drawing herbs or essential oils into the clay. Inscribe it with magickal symbols, or write on it in green ink with a magickal alphabet. Clay comes in many colors and is easy to work with. There is even clay you can bake; when it's done your object hardens into a permanent shape.

You can also make small figures from clay, such as talismans in the shape of animals, which will give you the good qualities of each animal. For example, a fox-shaped talisman would help to bring you the quick and cunning energy of the fox. A talisman in the form of an otter would bring you a playful energy that could help you have more fun. Historically, people have worn cat figures to bring them skill in divination. The cat shape also draws luck, protection, and a feeling of independence.

Potion Magick

Potions are probably among the first things that many people think of when they hear the word *witch*. When you hear the word *potion*, do you imagine a dark night, a bubbling cauldron of noxious brew, and three crones bent into the steam? Well, that sounds like a scene from *Macbeth* to us! Real witches mix real potions. They usually make them in their kitchens, and the ingredients are rarely so exotic as to include eye of newt. Potions are infusions of magickal herbs you can use as a tea or to anoint an object. Remember, never make a potion out of a poisonous plant if it is to be consumed.

Most potions are made by adding boiling water to magickally charged herbs and letting the herbs infuse for about 10 minutes, or by putting them into cold water and letting them sit in the sun all day to infuse naturally. If you heat your potion, it's best to cover the herbs while they are infusing so none of the vapor escapes.

Another way to make a potion is to place a jar of water and herbs in the light of the full Moon and let it set overnight. Then, empower the solution and place it in a dark closet until the next full Moon, when it will be ready. Until then, remember to shake your potion gently once or twice every other day while it's brewing.

When the potion has steeped, strain out the herbs and your potion is all set to do its work. You could use a potion made from banishing herbs to clean your house of a negative influence. You could add a love potion to your bath. You could also rub it on your skin or spritz it on a poppet. You can also make love potions using a wine base instead of water. Here are two potions you may want to try.

Love Potion

You will need:

- 4 oz. distilled water
- 4 drops lavender oil
- 5 drops cinnamon oil
- 3 drops clove oil
- 1 pinch Dragon's blood powder
- 1 small rose quartz crystal

Combine the ingredients and place in a bottle; infuse with your intent. Let it sit for nine days. Each and every day at the same time, reinforce your intent into the potion. After the ninth day, spray the potion in the room before the object of your affection comes over. Or heat the potion in a room diffuser. You can also place a tablespoon or two in the washing machine and let your clothes become infused with the potion's energies. Wear your magickally infused clothes around your honey to enhance your personal charm.

Stay-Away Potion

This potion does just what its name implies. It will keep people you don't want hanging around from hanging around you.

You will need:

- 4 oz. distilled water
- 2 tsp. black pepper
- 2 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. asafetida powder

Mix all the ingredients together and place your intent into the potion. Be specific about which people you want to have stay away. Let the potion sit for three days. Each day at the same time of day, reinforce your intent into the potion. After three days, take the potion outside and sprinkle it at the border of your property or where your walkway meets the public sidewalk. This potion works great with in-laws and will probably keep roaming dogs off your lawn, too. Refresh the potion and reinforce your intent every week until your problem goes away.

Powder Magick

After you have gained some experience with spells and working with herbs, you may want to try powder magick. To work powder magick, you mix up a powder and charge it with your magickal intent. Then you blow the powder, and with it your magick, into the air. Or you can bury the powder, sprinkle it on the ground or around a room, place it inside a poppet, or mix it into clay for a talisman.

Magickal powders are made from finely ground herbs, a binder—such as benzoin, mastic, or orrisroot—and colored talc. You can also add glitter, or powdered silver or gold.

Mix up a batch of your own custom-made powder. Or try our Sweet Dreams Powder:

- Finely ground chamomile
- Mugwort
- Lavender
- Sage
- Unscented blue talc for base

Use one part each of the herbs and four parts talc. If you can't find blue talc, use white and add a little food coloring.

Webweaving

Silver RavenWolf's book *To Light a Sacred Flame* (see Appendix A) has an excellent section on magickal powders. She even gives recipes for how to make several of her favorites.

Use your completed dream powder as a body powder, dusting yourself lightly before bed. In summer if you are sweaty or have a sunburn, dust a little dream powder over your sheets, keeping most of the powder at the foot of your bed. Then brush off the powder and climb into bed. You should have sweet and prophetic dreams.

Paper Magick

You can work paper magick without much in the way of special supplies. Build a cone of power and put the energy into a piece of paper by writing your magickal intent on it. Use magickal symbols or a magickal alphabet if you like. Then light the paper on fire and watch it burn. As it burns, concentrate on your intent and see your magick rise up and go to work. You could use colored paper in a shade that corresponds with your magick. You can also use fancy paper such as rag or parchment, but keep in mind that both of these burn quite slowly.

If you want to send your magick out quickly, buy some flash paper at your local metaphysical store. Flash paper has been specially treated to burn up in a flash. You light it and, poof, it is gone. Flash paper is great for magick that you want to send out with an extra kick, and is a great way to work with the element of Fire.

Flower Magick

We talked about herbs and botanicals in Chapter 18. But did you know that many common garden flowers have magickal properties? You can use them the same way you use herbs. But please don't eat them. Many flowers are poisonous and others can be very irritating to the skin and the digestive tract.

If someone brings you flowers, save and dry them. Flowers that have been given as gifts hold lots of great energy that you can use in your magick.

Flower	Magickal Properties
Blue Bell	Constancy, strength, luck, truth
Buttercup	Prosperity, happiness
Camellia	Gratitude, prosperity
Daffodil	Love, luck
Foxglove	Protection (poisonous plant!)
Geranium	Fertility, health, protection, love
Honeysuckle	Money; psychic and mental powers
Hyacinth	Love, protection, happiness
Lavender	Happiness, healing, peace, sleep, purification
Lilac	Protection, beauty, love
Lily	Protection, purity, breaking love spells

continues

continued

Flower	Magickal Properties
Lily of the Valley	Happiness, mental powers (poisonous plant!)
Marigold	Protection, dreams, psychic powers, business
Mullein	Courage, love, divination, protection
Periwinkle	Love, lust, money, protection
Primrose	Love, protection
Rose	Love, healing, divination, fertility
Rhododendron	Peace, strength (poisonous plant!)
Snapdragon	Protection, friendship
Sunflower	Wishes, wisdom, health, fertility
Tulip	Love, happiness, dreams
Yarrow	Courage, protection, love, psychic powers
Zinnia	Love, lust, strength

To use flowers in your magick, dry the petals and grind them with your mortar and pestle. You can mix them with herbs or essential oils. Or you can add flowers to a vial of oil. Flower petals also make nice additions to dream pillows, the water of your ritual bath, or potpourri.

The Least You Need to Know

- Poppet and cord spells create magick that is easy to undo. Just make sure you keep your poppet or knotted cord in a safe place.
- You can send out your magick using candles or incense. And you can fine-tune your magickal intent by adding in herbs and essential oils.
- Glamour magick will help you (or someone else) to see the beauty within.
- You can practice kitchen magick and charge your ordinary recipes with your magickal intent. But please ingest only herbs you know for certain are safe.
- With weather magick you can influence the weather, but you probably should use this only to protect your home, family, or community in unusual circumstances. This magick is not for every day.
- You can make your own talismans, amulets, magickal potions, and powders. You can even use ordinary paper or flowers in your magick.

Chapter 23

Doing Spells

In This Chapter

- How to write a spell
- Things you might want to use
- Casting that spell
- Spells that affect others
- This spell is broken!

You've seen some examples of spells in the last chapter and in other places throughout this book. You can use the spells we've presented or you can create your own. In this chapter we'll focus on exactly what you need to do to write your own spells.

Spells are like recipes. You use a pinch of this and a pinch of that, a drop of this and a drop of that. Add the right phase of the Moon, the right planetary correspondences, and most important of all, your magickal intent, and *voilà*—your magickal recipe is complete!

Using Spellcraft

Putting spells together is one of the central arts of witchcraft. Writing spells gives you a great opportunity to use your knowledge and creativity. Crafting a spell can take time and thought, although sometimes you'll see what you want to do all in one flash. The more familiar you are with all the magickal substances—herbs, oils, and stones, to name a few—the easier it will be for you to tailor a spell to your specific intent and circumstances.

Remember, you resort to crafting a spell to attain your goal only after you have exhausted all the mundane actions available to you. If you haven't really tried to get what you want through nonmagickal channels, then you probably won't be able to focus your energy sufficiently, and it is unlikely that your magick will work.

What Is a Spell?

In order to make your goal manifest, you must visualize it first, then focus on it and direct your energy toward it. A *spell* is a recipe that helps you visualize your magickal goal. Spells can have a number of different components, including ritualistic behavior, visualization, concentration, meditation, chanting, and physical objects. All these parts work together to help you make change happen.

Double, Bubble, Toil, and Trouble

Many people are naturals when it comes to creating rhymes and verse. Those people are lucky. Others have to work at it. But know that your spells don't have to rhyme or have meter, although it's fun when they rhyme, and the meter can help you build a cone of power.

def•i•ni•tion

A **spell** is a magickal recipe used to affect change. The Modern English word *spell* comes from an Old English word that meant "story" or "fable."

You can develop your ability to make verse by talking to yourself. When you're driving or walking, pick the first object that you see, name it, then find other words that rhyme with the name by going through the alphabet. For example, say you pick out a tree. First ask yourself if you can think of a word that starts with an *A* that rhymes with "tree." Can't come up with one? No problem. Move on. Can you think of a word that starts with *B* and rhymes with tree?

How about Brie? Then you would get Cree. And so on. Keep practicing. You will get quicker and quicker.

Macbeth watches as the three witches chant their rhyming spell in perfect iambic pentameter.

When rhyming word pairs start coming to you with speed, try making little two-line poems in the same way. You might come up with a couplet like this: "I see a cat in a tree. Let's hope this cat can see me." Practice creating two lines at a time until you feel comfortable. Then add two more lines. Once you get the hang of four lines, try rhyming every other line, so your first line will rhyme with the third line and the second line will rhyme with the last line.

Another technique that will help you to write spells in verse is to meditate and ask Spirit to give you the passion to put together a spell in verse. When you work on creating a spell, visualize what it is you want from the spell. Imagine what it will feel like to obtain your goal. Put that passion into writing your spell. Eventually you will be able to rattle off spells for any purpose. Write them down and you'll have a whole Book of Shadows ready for any magickal situation.

So Mote It Be

Commit to practice rhyming for a week, and see how much progress you make. Every time you get into the car or walk out of the house practice. Think of it this way: rhyming all the way to work has to be more fun than gnashing your teeth and worrying. At the end of the week, get out your notebook and write five rhyming couplets. See, you have learned something!

Remember, though, if you don't want to write spells with rhyme and meter, you don't have to. You can just talk to the Elements the way you would talk to a friend and speak to deity with awe and respect. When you build a cone of power, you can repeat one word—money or prosperity, for example—over and over again. Or you could chant the name of the particular Element you are drawing on. What matters most is not clever rhymes and rhythms, but the passion and energy that you put into your words.

What Are Spells Used For?

Spells are used to bring about change. They do this by helping you to direct energy. The change could be for you or for someone else. Change could mean that you want to obtain an object or it could mean that you want to alter a situation for the better.

What Are You Trying to Accomplish with Your Spell?

By now, you know that you use magick only for the good of all. You should not cast a spell that will harm anyone. The outcome you want to achieve with a spell must be crystal clear. If your goal isn't clear, you won't be able to use magick to reach it.

You can work to change many different things using spells. One of the first things you'll want to work on is yourself. For example, you may want to use magick to release the anger of past events and allow healing, peaceful energies to flow within you. As you grow and become a better person, you will probably discover that many of the other circumstances that you had thought to change have corrected themselves.

Before you do a spell, make sure that you are addressing your needs and not just a passing whim. You should never use spells for frivolous matters. You have to know the difference between your needs—food, clothing, shelter, love, acceptance, and spirituality—and your wants. You'll be better off if you address your needs first.

Banish!

Don't rush to do a spell to correct a bothersome situation. Before you act magickally, make sure you have exhausted all the mundane means available to rectify the problem. You also must think out all the possible outcomes to your spell.

You may feel you need a Lexus, but what you really could use is transportation and that could take the form of a bicycle, an old Toyota, or a convenient system of public buses. If you do address your needs first, some of your wants may very well disappear. If you have transportation and love, you may no longer desire a fancy car that will impress others.

Reexamining Your Intent

Before you go ahead and write a spell, you'll want to reexamine your intent. Ask yourself questions. Look at what you want and see if your getting it is going to harm anyone or anything. If getting what you want will harm someone, stop and rethink your goal. You should also double-check that the outcome of your spell will not impinge on anyone's free will. In addition, you need to ask yourself how achieving your goal is going to affect you. Imagine how you will feel after your goal has been reached. Think through both the short-term and the long-term repercussions. If you are comfortable with all your answers and are willing to accept the karmic consequences, go ahead with your spell. Remember that you alone are responsible for your actions and for any side effects your spell might cause.

Writing Your Own Spells

Writing your own spells can be fun and empowering. Spell writing is a way to give voice to your passion and desires. It can also be a great creative outlet, and that is healing in and of itself.

Be Creative: Your Spell Worksheet

After you have determined your intent and examined all the possible repercussions of doing magick to achieve your goal, you need to decide what kind of spell you want to do. Do you want to call on the powers of ...

- Air?
- Fire?
- Water?
- Earth?
- Or a combination of Elements?

The Element or Elements you call will help to determine what you actually do in casting your spell. If you want to work with Fire, you may want to do a candle magick spell. You may decide you want to work with Fire because you want to draw fiery things—love, lust, or passion—to you. If you would rather work with Air, powders may be your thing. You might work Air magick because your goal involves thought and communication. If you were doing a spell that concerned communication with a

lover, you could work with both Fire and Air at the same time by using incense in your magick.

Gather all your tools together. If you have decided to make a poppet or do knot magick, refer to the list of materials in Chapter 22. When writing any spell, consider whether you want to use some of the following:

- Candles
- Clay
- Crystals or stones
- Essential oils
- Feathers
- Food
- Herbs, botanicals, or flowers
- Incense
- Paper
- Powders
- Seeds
- Soil or sand

If you are putting together a love spell, look at all the materials available to you that are associated with drawing love. You could buy an essential oil mixture that is designed to bring love, take it home, and consecrate it. Or you could mix your own. When mixing your own, think about all the different aspects of love. Which ones do you want to emphasize? You could throw a heavy dose of lust and passion into the mix, or you could design your blend for affection and stability. You could do this by adding herbs that represent these aspects of love to the essential oil mixture. You could even add stone chips that represent your need or desire. Then shake it all up, empower the oil for your purpose, and your oil is ready to use in your spell.

Unless you are facing an emergency situation, figure out the best time to cast your spell. You could wait for a certain phase of the Moon or a particular day of the week. And don't forget about color correspondences. You can use the color of your candle, stones, or powders to fine-tune your magick in many ways.

So Mote It Be

Get out your notebook and work on writing a spell to aid your spell-writing abilities. Look over the lists of magickal herbs, stones, and essential oils throughout this book. Be creative. Use objects and materials you are drawn to. When you are finished writing, review Chapters 20 and 21 and determine the best time to do your spell. Select a date and a time, make sure that you have all your materials beforehand, and cast that spell. Afterward, be sure to write down all the important information on a Magickal Record sheet.

Rhyming and Words of Power

It's nice to have a magick chant you can say when casting your spell. So even if you don't think you can do it, you should give rhyming a chance. As you write, think about what it is you want to accomplish. (Even if you aren't using rhyme, you should write out what you want to say as part of the spell.) You might want to call an Element as part of your spell. A chant that draws on the Element of Fire for love and passion might sound like this:

Fire strong, Fire bright,
Put love in my heart tonight.
Passion, lust, let me burn,
My beloved I'll not spurn.
Fire, heat us with your power.
Let love reign hour upon hour.

After writing a chant like this one you may decide to reconsider. Maybe you want to add some emotional Water energy to your spell:

Fire, Fire warm my heart,
Passion to me now impart.
Water, sweetener of emotion,
Bring me love and devotion.
Passion and tenderness come to me.
This is my will, so mote it be.

Which Elements you work with is your choice. Know that once you have decided on your words and invested them with your energy and passion, they become your words of power—even if you think you can't write or that your rhymes sound silly. Your words represent your will and desire, because they come from your heart. When you repeat them over and over again, your energy will intensify, you will see your magick happen in your mind's eye, and your words will direct your power to manifest a change.

Remember to Keep Your Magickal Record

As we discussed in Chapter 7, you'll want to record all the elements that went into your spell in your grimoire, which will serve as a recipe book for all the magick that you have done. Take a look at Appendix B for some more tips on how to do this.

In addition to being a record of all your spells, your grimoire will help you to learn about magick and to learn what works for you. The reality is that when you first start doing magick you probably won't see much in the way of results. Your first six tries, in fact, may come to nothing, but one day, perhaps on your seventh attempt, your magick will happen. When it does, you'll want to be able to look back and see what was different about your working on the day your spell achieved its goal.

A Step-by-Step Guide to Spell Casting

Your spell is written. You've gathered your tools. Now you are ready to cast your spell and send out your magick. You can work your spell inside ritual or you can do magick by itself.

If you plan on doing ritual, prepare your space. Get out all your tools, take your ritual bath, and dress in your ritual outfit. Cleanse and consecrate your space, pull up your magick circle, and start your ritual. Usually magick is done in ritual after you have called the God and Goddess and before you partake of cakes and wine.

If you are not going to do ritual, cleanse and consecrate your sacred space, pull up your magick circle, summon the Element you need for your spell (or the Elemental of that Element) or call deity, then do your magick.

If you have written a chant as part of your spell, you'll use it to help you build your cone of power. It's a good idea to have all the steps of your spell written out. Bring that paper into the circle with you so you can refer to it while you are working.

Doing Magick for Someone Else

You already know you should do magick for another person only if you have that person's permission. If you do magick for someone without permission, you are impinging on that person's free will and you will have to pay karmic consequences. If a person asks you to do magick, make sure the magick you have been asked to do is worth doing. You need to know if the person is sincere and if the magick is really for that person, or if he or she really intends it for someone else. You also need to be certain that the person has done all he or she can on the mundane level to achieve his or her goal.

When doing magick for someone else, keep in mind that it is never okay to accept money for your magickal work. People will want to pay you, but you cannot take their money. First of all, moneymaking is not what magick is for. If you do accept

money for your magick, your magick will start to lose its spiritual value. Taking money for your magick can also create greed within you. In addition, you need to know that charging someone for magickal work is illegal in many states.

The people you have helped may be very uncomfortable with the feeling that they owe you. What you can do is have them donate the money they would have given you to the charity of your choice. Alternatively, ask them to pass on your good deed by helping someone else. This way your magickal energy helps the person you did your working for and others as well.

Banish!

Never take payment for your magick. Your magickal skills should not be turned into a business. Taking money may line your pocket with silver, but it will leave you spiritually bankrupt. And being a witch is primarily about your spirit. You also want to keep in mind that charging people for magickal workings is illegal and can get you into real mundane trouble, too.

How to Break a Spell

Some spells were just made to be broken! In Chapter 22, we gave you spells for working poppet magick and knot magick. Spells using both of these types of magick are easy to undo. To undo a poppet spell, just take the poppet apart. For a knot magick spell, all you need to do is untie the knots in the reverse order that you tied them. If you like, you can say a little rhyme like the one in Chapter 22 while you do your undoing work.

You can also write a spell that undoes itself. Here's an example of a spell for enhancing karma that will break itself:

Listen to this spell I weave, take heed in what is told,
For your hatred and unkind deeds will return to thee threefold.
By the rise of the next full Moon a witch will sit and weep,
For all the sorrow ye have sewn, thee will begin to reap.
It's not too late to change your ways and break this painful spell,
Replace the hatred in your heart so only love may dwell.
So mote it be.

Once the person in question has stopped acting and feeling hateful, the spell will break itself. This is also an example of a spell that will influence someone else's behavior. Notice that the spell itself does not mete out any punishment. It just serves as a

reminder to the individual that there will be karmic payback for his or her negative actions.

Another way to undo magick is to send the spell back to the person who cast it. For a spell that does just that, see the "Breaking Another Witch's Spell" section in the next chapter. If you want to break your own spell, you can try casting a new spell that will call the old spell back. When doing this, however, there are no guarantees. Your spell-breaking spell may not work. This is yet another reason to be absolutely sure of what you want and why you want it to begin with, before you decide to do magick to achieve it.

One way to try to undo a spell you have cast is to take a cord and a pair of scissors, consecrate them, and empower them with your intent. As you cut the cord into little pieces, say the following chant:

Recall the magick of this spell,
The intent that I sent out,
From me to there and back again,
This time I have no doubt.
Break the spell and set it free,
This now is my command:
The energy cometh back to me,
Return it to my hand.

Cut up the entire cord. While cutting, hold all the pieces in one hand and don't let them drop. When you finish, take all the pieces and bury them in the earth to ground the energy you sent out.

The Pros and Cons of Binding Spells

There are many arguments in favor of *binding* spells. One of the chief advantages of binding spells is that the magick can be easy to undo. All you have to do is unbind or take apart the magickal object you used in your spell. And of course, the purpose of binding spells—to bind up and stop a negative behavior—is positive. Getting rid of an unwanted behavior of your own or someone else's can certainly improve the lives of everyone.

def•i•ni•tion

To bind means "to tie or wrap with cord" or to "restrain." So a **binding** spell ties up or restrains a person's negative behavior, but not the person himself or herself.

However, you also must consider the downside of binding spells. Even though you are binding the person's behavior and not the actual person, a binding

spell can be seen as impinging on the free will of the individual because the person in question in some way enjoys the negative behavior. If you curtail someone's free will, you will bring yourself karmic payback. You need to assess if the behavior is truly causing more harm than pleasure. If you are dealing with a diabetic who can't stay away from sugar, binding the behavior could very well save that person's life. In such a case, you probably would not get hit with any negative karma. On the other hand, it wouldn't make sense to do a binding spell to keep Katherine away from chocolate because her indulgence isn't really doing anyone any harm. (Also, she has never really tried mundane means to curb her intake of sweets.)

If a nasty neighbor were spreading vicious lies about another neighbor, you'd need to weigh the pros and cons before you take action. First, determine that the liar is acting out of complete malice. Sure, that person is getting some gratification from his or her action, but what is it doing to the person being talked about? In a case like this, you could decide to bind the lying neighbor's behavior, even though you would be encroaching on his or her free will. It is possible that you might receive a small karmic nip in return, but it is unlikely that the karmic payback would be harmful or heavy.

The Least You Need to Know

- A spell is a magickal recipe with a number of components, including ritual, chanting, meditation, visualization, and magickal objects.
- Many witches like to write their spells in verse. Rhyme and meter are nice in a spell but, if you prefer, you don't have to use them.
- You should never accept money for doing magick. Taking money for using your magickal skills will strip the spirituality from your practice. It is also illegal, so don't do it.
- Poppet and knot magick spells are easy to undo. You just have to take the poppet apart or untie the knots in your cord. You can even write spells that undo themselves. It is possible to call a spell back, but it doesn't always work.
- When doing binding spells to stop someone's negative behavior, you could be messing with his or her free will and may incur some karmic payback.

Chapter 24

Spells to Start With

In This Chapter

- Spells for empowering a talisman or potion
- Blessings and invocations you can use
- Spells to draw the positive: healing, love, money, and more
- Spells to protect from harm
- Elemental and faery magick

Because witches are a creative bunch, there's no end to the number of spells, chants, talismans, amulets, and potions that you will encounter. You'll want to start creating your own, too. Or maybe you have already begun. In this chapter, we'll give you some more spells and a couple of invocations. Use them if you like. Or use them as models to help you craft your own.

If you do plan to use the spells that follow, read through all the directions a few times before you begin your magick. And when you are finished, don't forget to keep your magickal records.

More on Notions and Potions

We talked a little about making talismans, amulets, and potions in Chapter 22. Here are two spells you can use—one to empower an amulet or talisman and one for a potion.

Crystal Talisman or Amulet

You can empower a crystal to either draw something you want toward you—money, love, or luck, for instance—or keep negative energies away from you. To do this, choose a crystal to match your intent (see Chapter 18). Cleanse the crystal of negative energy and then charge the crystal with your intent by chanting the following:

Air and Water, Earth and Fire,
Hearken to my strong desire.
Charge this crystal in its work for me.
As I have said it, so mote it be.

Envision your magick coming to pass while you chant. When you are finished, you can either carry the crystal with you or give it to someone else.

Webweaving

In the late 1500s, a Dr. John Fian tried to make a talisman to draw a particular young woman to him. He asked one of the woman's relatives, a young boy, to collect some of her pubic hair. The boy told his mother what the doctor wanted, and she decided to trick him. She sent the doctor some hairs from a cow instead. Fian did his magick, using what he thought were the hairs from the object of his desire. Lo and behold, the cow appeared at his door, and followed him everywhere he went!

Empowering a Potion

When making a potion, say this chant while envisioning your magick coming to pass:

Strong the witch and strong the brew,
Here is magick made anew.
I charge this potion with my will,
Its magick purpose to fulfill.

Blessings and Invocations

Witches have probably come up with more than a million different ways to bestow good energy on an object or to call in positive entities when doing magick. Here's an example of a blessing. And here is another invocation that you can use in ritual.

Book Blessing

You can say this blessing over your grimoire or Book of Shadows:

In the realm of magick this book shall reside.
No one but the chosen shall see what's inside.
If breath be to Air as passion to Fire,
Let harm come to none, this is my desire.
If life be to Earth as Water to emotions,
This book be filled with magical potions.
May the Gods protect it, keep it from harm,
And upon it bestow power, magick, and charm.
No one without wisdom shall peer at its pages,
Or the knowledge inside handed down through the ages.
This book be it mine, it harbors no fears.
The knowledge obtained through blood, sweat, and tears,
My magick's my passion, the spirit's my guide.
The love for the Goddess I hold deep inside.
The book may she bless it with spiritual light.
And let only her children read of its rite.
For those of the Wicca truly can see,
That this is my will, so mote it be.

An Invocation

If you have important magick to do, you might want to stir the Watchtowers using this Watchtower call. Remember to do so gently:

I gently stir the North's Watchtower,
Encompass us with nurturing power,
Guard this circle with strength untold,
Protect us from harm with courage of bold.

I gently stir the East's Watchtower,
Whose message is clear and filled with power.
Guard this circle with strength untold,
Protect us from harm with courage of bold.

I gently stir the South's Watchtower,
Stretching across us with flames of power,
Guard this circle with strength untold,
Protect us from harm with courage of bold

I gently stir the West's Watchtower,
To direct the Water of emotional power.
Guard this circle with strength untold,
Protect us from harm with courage of bold.

Note that when stirring the Watchtowers, most witches start with the North and work deosil (clockwise) around the circle. Some witches and many high magickians begin in the East and move deosil from there.

Spells to Draw the Positive

We all want good things in our lives. These spells can help you draw what you want toward you. Remember that magick takes its own time, so don't expect results overnight.

Healing Necklace

You will need three strands of embroidery thread, 2 or 3 feet long. Blue, green, and white are good colors for this purpose. You will also need a handful of pony beads in the same colors. Sit in your magick circle and tie the lengths of thread together at one end. Then begin braiding them. As you do so, string a bead every third time you cross the strings.

Webweaving

There are many stones with healing properties. Healing stones include agate, amber, amethyst, beryl, bloodstone, calcite, flint, jade, and topaz, among others.

While you create your charmed jewelry, softly repeat these words:

Braid by braid the magick grows.
Through each bead, the healing flows.
Let the wearer quickly find
Wholeness again in body and mind.

Strongly visualize the one who will wear the necklace—whether it be you or another. Continue braiding the threads and see that person as healthy and comfortable.

Love Candle

Remember that you must not direct a love spell toward a specific individual. You cannot make someone fall in love with you. To do so would impinge on that person's free will and would cause karmic repercussions for you. A love spell is meant to bring the right individual, no matter who that may be, to you.

You will need two pink tapers, an essential oil that draws love and relationships, and a rose quartz crystal (see Chapter 18). You will also need a small flower pot, enough soil or sand to fill it halfway, and a piece of pink embroidery thread.

Anoint the candles and, using the crystal, carve your magickal name on one candle. On the other candle, carve symbols of love. Tie the two candles together with the thread and stick them in the pot of soil.

Six nights before the full Moon, light both candles. Sit before them and spend 10 or 15 minutes meditating on what you want. Conjure a clear, strong image of your magickal goal. See your magick coming to pass and feel it happening. Then put both candles out. Do this every night for seven nights. As the candles burn, they will melt into each other and fuse, and so your magick will occur.

On the night of the full Moon, light your candles and do your meditation, as before. When you are done, take your fused candles outside and bury them in a place that you pass by often. If you don't have a place to bury them, let them burn all the way down. And know that your magick will come to pass.

Fertility Poppets

Okay, folks, this spell involves sex between two consenting adults for the purpose of procreation. If you use this spell, it is very likely you will conceive a child. We just thought we should warn you.

You will need your spouse, partner, or mate; some stuffing; red cloth for your adult poppet; and green cloth for the baby poppet. You can use blue fabric for a boy baby or pink for a girl

Banish!

Resist the temptation to do a fertility poppet spell without your partner's knowledge or consent. Because such a spell is likely to result in conception, this magick will affect both of you in a serious way. Consider all the repercussions seriously and carefully before you act. Then consider them all again.

if you would like to attempt to influence the gender of the child you will conceive. You will also need some magickal herbs.

Sew a baby poppet out of the green cloth. Stuff it and add herbs. You might want to use carob for protection and health, carnation for strength, and clover for success. You can also add crystals such as bloodstone, which will also bring strength.

Fashion a mommy poppet from the red cloth. Stuff the mommy poppet and add herbs. You might want to use chickweed and hawthorn for fertility and hyacinth for love, protection of the fetus, and happiness during the pregnancy. You can also add crystals such as rose quartz for love and moss agate or salt for fertility. Don't sew her up all the way, but leave a space on the side of the stomach so you can insert the baby poppet at the right moment.

When the poppets are finished, set up for ritual by taking your bath. (You might want to do this together with your partner.) After you bathe, cleanse your space, be it the bedroom or another room of the house. It is your choice what room you would like to do this ritual in. Be creative. Before you begin your ritual, be sure to place the poppets in a location where you can send the energy from your love making to them. For example, if you make love in the bedroom, place the poppet under the bed.

Envision a circle of white light around the bed or area where you plan to make love. Turn on some soft music, light a few candles (be sure they will not be knocked over), and maybe light some incense. To begin your magick, start to make love. As you do this, envision the energy you are creating moving through you and down into the poppets under the bed. Imagine the energy as a red or blue light and envision the pregnancy happening. When you are finished making love, place the baby poppet inside the mommy poppet. Then sew up the adult poppet and placed it in a safe place until the spell has come to pass. After the child is born, the baby poppet can be used in a protection spell for the child.

Money and Prosperity

This money-drawing spell is fun to do. You will need two nickels and some strong glue. Glue the two coins together, being careful not to glue yourself to the coins. As you do this, say:

As one coin to another clings,
The energy of wealth it brings.
The more I keep them close to me,
The greater my good fortune be.

Carry the glued-together coins in your pants pocket so they are near your root chakra—your internal wheel of energy associated with material needs. Or place them on your altar.

If you try this spell, make sure to record what you have done in your grimoire.

Or try the following spell for prosperity. Obtain a fresh, ripe pineapple. Cut off the top half of the pineapple. Peel, core, and cube it. Then carefully scoop out the insides of the bottom half. You want to leave the skin unbroken so you can use the bottom as a serving bowl. Core and cube the flesh.

So Mote It Be

Alfalfa sprouts and peas are two easily grown vegetables that will help bring you money. Whole unprocessed oats will, too, but unless you are a lamb, you probably don't want to eat them!

In a mixing bowl, stir the cubed pineapple with 1 tsp. cinnamon, 1 tsp. ground ginger, and 1 tsp. allspice. As you stir, say:

May this sacred food be blessed,
So to bring me all the best.

Load the spiced pineapple back into the bowl you have created from the bottom half. Chill, then serve as dessert after a meal. It's nice to gaze at the pineapple's skin as you eat this fruit mixture. Allow yourself to take in the prosperous energy. Repeat this spell every few weeks to manifest your own prosperity.

Luck

We all could use a little good luck now and then. To enhance yours, make your own lucky anointing oil. To do this you will need:

- 2 oz. unscented almond oil
- 3 drops cinnamon essential oil
- 9 drops of rose or lotus oil
- 1 pinch dried vetivert
- 1 allspice berry
- 1 small peridot stone

Place the oils and spices in a jar or small bowl. When the moon is waxing, drop the stone into the oil and say:

Stone to oil and oil to me,
Great will the change in my fortunes be.
Lucky I am in all I do.
This oil be so charged and this magick be true.

Before you leave your home each day, anoint your feet with your lucky oil. You can also use this oil in small amounts on your purse or wallet. You can even apply it to lottery tickets, but do so sparingly; you wouldn't want to smear the ink! Your luck should noticeably improve within one cycle of the moon.

Spells to Keep Away the Negative

When you cleanse and consecrate your tools and your sacred space, you purge them of negative energies. You can also use spells to keep negative energies at bay. If you feel threatened, you can do a protection spell. If negative behavior, either yours or someone else's, is making your life hell, you could try a binding spell. And if your problems stem from another witch's spell? We even have a way to deal with that.

Protection Spells

Here are two protection spells that will protect you against anything from which you want protection. One of them uses candles and the other one employs garlic, a classic repellant for bad vibes and negative energy.

You will need:

- 1 large scarf or warm blanket
- 1 green candle
- 1 yellow candle
- 1 red candle
- 1 blue candle

Place the candles at the four directions: Green in the North, Yellow in the East, Red in the South, Blue in the West. Light them. Drape the blanket or scarf over your head. (If you have a blanket—or blankie!—to which you are particularly attached, use it.)

Then say:

Elementals, hearken to me.
Give my words the strength to be.
Lord and Lady, bless this spell.
An it harm none, shall it work well.

Veil of protection, soft and warm,
Insulate me from curse or storm.
All evil shall you turn aside,
Around me only love abide.

And as I lift this blanket from my head,
I leave a veil of magick instead.
Protective shield, around me stay,
Keep all bad energies at bay
Throughout the night and every day.

For the garlic protection spell, you will need three (or more) heads of garlic with their grassy leaves attached. Use the largest heads you can find. Braid the leaves together. Add beads or stones that correlate with protection if you feel so inclined. As you braid, say:

Leaves of grass I braid today,
Keeping evil far away.
All that causes grief or strife
Is now banished from my life.

When you are done, hang the braided heads on the wall or on the door to your home.

Banish!

Protection spells are great, and we hope that if you do one, it does help you feel more secure. But please avoid being careless. Casting a protection spell does not make you invincible. You still have to look both ways crossing the street, wear your seat belt, lock your doors, and exercise reasonable caution.

Binding Spells

Keep in mind when doing a binding spell that you probably are impinging another person's free will. If you are, there may be karmic repercussions for you. (For more on binding spells, see Chapter 23.)

To do a cord-binding spell, you'll need a piece of black cord or ribbon, some paper, and a pen. (If you like, you can use this chant with some objects of your own devising. Be creative!) Write a brief description of the negative behavior on the paper. Roll it up tight. Wrap the paper with the cord or ribbon. As you do this, visualize the behavior being bound and chant the following:

With this symbolic cord I bind you.
Where you rest my spell will find you.
By my hand, your behavior will cease,
Until such time this knot I release.

After you have bound up the paper, go outside and bury it deep in the earth. If you don't have access to land where you can bury something, put the paper away in a safe place where you will not have to see it. If you need to undo this spell, retrieve the paper and remove the cord. One of the advantages of binding spells is that you can undo them by unbinding the object that you tie up in ritual.

Breaking Another Witch's Spell

If another witch has put a hex on you, here's how to undo it. You will need a length of silver cord and your bolline (magick knife used for cutting) or a pair of scissors. Tie one knot in each end of the cord. As you do this, visualize one knot representing you and the other the person who cast the hex. Cut the cord in the center, chant the following, and see the spell breaking:

From you to me this spell I break,
This was not right for you to make.
Its path I will abruptly end,
And back to you the spell I send.

Spells for Elemental and Faery Magick

In Elemental magick, you work with the Elements. You'll pick which Element you will work with based on your magickal intent. As you may recall ...

- Air is associated with thought and communication.
- Fire is associated with passion, courage, and change.
- Water is associated with psychic energy, emotion, and intuition.
- Earth is associated with growth, nurturing, and abundance.

When you use faery magick, you summon the faeries and ask them to help you.

Air Magick

Here's an Air magick spell that you can use to increase your psychic awareness. This spell is best done in the early morning during a waxing Moon.

You will need:

- 1 charcoal tablet
- 3 bay laurel leaves
- 1 pinch mugwort
- 1 pinch cinnamon
- 1 small piece yarrow

Stand near the open window and light the charcoal. Place it in your cauldron, incense burner, or other fireproof container. Add the herbs. Allow the smoke to waft outdoors. As it does so, say:

As the smoke to freedom flies,
May it open up my eyes.
Great breath of the mother, help me see
All of your realms open to me.

Gaze into the smoke. Allow your mind to become still and focus on your magickal intent. Some witches relax their eyes so that their vision blurs and images from the spirit realm become apparent.

Fire Magick

To gain energy and enhance your own get-up-and-go, try this spell. This one is especially good if you have been feeling sluggish or down. You will need a red candle, a CD player or boom box, and CD of danceable music, preferably with a strong beat. This spell is best done at noon between the waxing and the full Moon.

Light the candle. Concentrate on the flame and say:

My energy has been so low;
Element of Fire, help it grow.
I call you to me in this dance,
My vital energy to enhance.

Put on your music, and, whether you feel like it or not, begin to move your body to the beat. The wilder and faster you can dance the better. Take a break after 5 or so minutes. Return your focus to the candle. Say the words of the chant again or meditate and visualize yourself full of Fire's spark and vitality. Then return to dancing. Repeat as needed. When you feel that your batteries have been recharged, snuff out the candle and put away for future use with this spell.

Water Magick

Of course, magickal baths are part of Water magick. Why not let Water's power help you with one of life's deeper emotions? Take this special bath to grow greater courage.

You will need:

- A handful of borage flowers or leaves
- A few pinches of thyme
- 1 or 2 drops sweet pea essential oil
- A few drops of blue food coloring
- A blue candle
- 1 stick cedar incense

Webweaving

It is said that when faeries are present, candle flames in the room will start to dance. So even if you don't feel anything, watch the flames and see if they flicker.

Run your bath and add the herbs, oil, and food coloring. Light your candle and your incense. Turn out the light and get into your bath. While you steep, say this chant:

Water, embrace me with your power,
Grow my courage with every hour.
Senseless fears all wash away,
Leaving me bold and strong today.

When you leave the tub, dry yourself vigorously. See yourself as a spiritual warrior ready to take on whatever comes your way.

Earth Magick

In this Earth magick spell, which you'll want to do on the waxing Moon, you'll plant the seeds of success for any business venture. You will need a flower pot, some rich topsoil, and seeds of your choosing. (In addition to the magickal correspondences, you'll want to consider which types of seeds will grow in your conditions.) Fill the pot with soil and water lightly. As you press the seeds into the soil, chant:

Just as the seeds that I do here sow,
I watch my bounty develop and grow.

If your seeds do not grow, try again next month.

Faery Magick

Be sure you really want to work with faeries. As we mentioned in Chapter 15, faeries can work wonderful magick for you, but they are also very mischievous and difficult to get rid of once they have infested the house. If you've decided you're ready to work with them, you will need—in addition to knowing your magickal intent—your magick tools and some *faery dust.*

def•i•ni•tion

Faery dust is a superfine glitter, similar to embossing powder. You can buy it in small vials at most metaphysical shops. Some people keep the vials closed and wear them as magickal jewelry.

On a waxing Moon, sit in your magickal circle with your tools and faery dust. Relax and visualize walking through the portal to the magickal Realm of Faery. Walk through this wondrous place and drink in the magick. You may see faeries peering at you from their hiding places, flying overhead, or you may just hear them laugh. Get the feel of what it is like to be around faeries. When you're ready, come back through the portal and open your eyes in your magick circle. Now you can begin by chanting this verse:

To Faery realms on moonlit night,
You lords and ladies of the Sidhe,
I search for you and do invite
Your presence in sacred space with me.
Bright ones, fair ones hear my voice,
Hearken to my magick call.
Come or not, it is your choice,
But magick touches one and all.

And if you choose to work with me,
Lending power to my spell,
I will sincerely grateful be
And also will reward you well.
Sweet milky drinks or honeyed-wine
Are offered up to pay your fee.
I invite your energies join with mine,
Wise ones of Faery, come to me!

When you are finished sit very still and quietly wait for them to appear. You may not see them at first, but you may feel their presence as an itch or a tickle in your hair.

After they have arrived, do your intended magickal work. When you have finished, leave some sweet milk out for them, some faery dust, or some wine mixed with honey.

The Least You Need to Know

- You can use spells to empower talismans, amulets, and potions with your magickal intent. Use one from a book, or write your own.
- Saying a blessing over an object gives that object positive energy and makes it special. Invocations can also draw good things—entities that help you with your magick.
- You can write spells (or use ones from books) that draw good things to you, such as love, fertility, prosperity, or luck.
- Protection spells protect you from negativity and harm. You can also use spells to help stop negative behavior—your own or someone else's.
- You can use faery magick by summoning the faeries to help you, but be sure that you really want their help. Once faeries are in your house, it's hard to get them to leave!
- You can work with each Element—Air, Fire, Water, or Earth—separately. When you work magick with the Elements, you also use their physical manifestations in your spells.

Chapter 25

A Year and a Day

In This Chapter

- How to begin your study
- Spring: Planting the seeds of new beginnings
- Summer: Days filled with light and Nature's bounty
- Fall: Turning inward and taking stock
- Winter: A time for introspection and gathering your energies
- What's next?

You've come this far. On your way, you have accumulated a lot of info. Now you will deepen your knowledge and understanding and put your learning to good use. This chapter is about doing. Yup, it's time to move out of lying-on-the-couch-reading mode and into action. We hope that you have done the exercises in each chapter and have tried doing some ritual and some magick. If not, well, this is the time for you to plunge in.

Because this chapter is chock-full of activities and projects, it is probably best for you to read it once through. Then go back and use each major section as a step-by-step guide for your new practice of witchcraft. Are you ready? Let's go!

Your Year-and-a-Day Study

You are about to become a scholar and a student of witchcraft. You will have to work hard—reading, listening, researching, and studying—to get a proper grounding in all the knowledge you must have to truly call yourself a witch. The program of study we have laid out below will guide you along your Wiccan path. It may look like a lot of work, but, rest assured, it will be rewarding. Please know that if it takes you more than a year and a day to complete your studies, that's okay. Be cool with yourself, and keep at it!

Some of the activities you will undertake are practices that you will engage in every day. Others are things that you will do regularly, and still others are more like one time assignments—projects or investigations that are designed to start your exploration of a given area of knowledge or thought. In your reading, you'll want to take notes. And keep a running list of all the books that you have consulted. This way you will develop a bibliography and you'll know where to find your facts should you need to go back to them.

In addition to the assignments listed here, over the course of the year, you will be acquiring your major magickal tools—an athame, cauldron, chalice, pentagram, and wand. Remember that you may not have to buy all of these items. You can make them, or you may find some of them. Or perhaps someone will give you one of the magickal tools that you seek. You'll also probably need candles, incense, and something to hold the burning incense.

Although the sections that follow begin with spring, please start your work with the season that you are actually experiencing. For example, if right now it is fall, begin your year-and-a-day study with the section about fall. We have chosen each learning project specifically to "go with" the energy of its season. This way the natural feel of each season should make your tasks easier. And you know that it is important for you to tune into the energy and natural rhythm of the seasons, right? You'll note that for convenience sake we have cut the year up into seasons of unequal lengths. Again, we are going with the feel and energy of each period of time and the actions most appropriate for that vibe.

Webweaving

If you like to make things, look for *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Wicca Crafts* by Miria Liguana and Nina Metzner (Alpha Books, 2004). You'll learn to make all kinds of supplies, from ritual tools to robes to jewelry. You, too, can be a crafty witch!

All that said, should you feel that an activity feels more natural for you in a season other than the one to which we have assigned it, please go ahead and do it when it seems right for you. It is, after all, your spiritual practice.

Spring

Traditionally a time to start new things, spring really is a time of new beginnings. Flowers are sprouting—or at least preparing to do so, trees are growing buds, and birds are preparing to nest. In the Wiccan religion, Imbolc, which is celebrated on February 2, is seen as the time of renewed fertility of the earth. The soil is starting to warm, and seeds are just beginning to germinate. As such, this is a great time to start on your new path. While early February may not feel like spring, Nature really is getting ready to burst forth.

Some covens initiate new members at Imbolc. Try thinking of yourself as a seed newly planted and preparing to germinate in the warming Earth.

Commitment

The first thing you'll want to do in the spring is make a declaration of commitment to the Wiccan path. We explained about dedication and how to do a dedication ritual in Chapter 8. So, if you have not done so already, start planning your own dedication. Either use the ritual we outlined for you, or write your own. Now, let us be the first to congratulate you and welcome you into the Craft!

Your Grimoire and Book of Shadows

This is also the time for you to start keeping your grimoire and your Book of Shadows. Every time you write in them, make sure to note the time of day, the phase of the Moon, and the sign of the Moon. As described earlier, you'll record spells and rituals that you do in your grimoire. You'll want to keep your Book of Shadows handy to write down all your thoughts and feelings as you enter into your Wiccan practice. Make a commitment to yourself; you will write in your books regularly during your whole year and a day. Between the two books, you will be writing once or twice every two weeks. And make certain to record information, your thoughts, and your feelings after full Moon rituals and holidays. If you like, use the book blessing in Chapter 22 to "break in" your new magickal journal.

Growing and Opening Your Mind

At this point, you probably know that many "witchy" activities require you to focus. Meditation is a great way to practice focusing and build up your powers of concentration. It also will help to quiet the internal monologue in your head.

You need to make a commitment to meditate every day. Start off with 10-minute sessions and build up to 20 minutes. Once you get the hang of it, it won't seem like a long time at all. And everyone we know who meditates regularly is happier and calmer than they were before they began their practice!

To help keep yourself motivated while developing this new habit, buy some gold-star stickers at your local office supply shop. Stick a sticker on your calendar for each day that you fulfill your commitment. Pretty soon meditation will become an automatic and regular part of your day and you'll be doing it without having to think about it.

Now, here is a one-time, spring meditation assignment. Of course, feel free to do it more than once! You may want to record yourself reading the text that follows so you can relax, listen, and really get into the openness this meditation is designed to bring.

Sit up straight in a chair with your feet flat on the floor. Close your eyes, place your hands on your thighs, and relax your shoulders and belly. Watch your breath as it moves in and out of your body.

> *You are the first growth of a slim green plant. Take a few breaths to allow this image of yourself to grow clear and sharp. Keep breathing and feel your roots pushing down into the earth from the bottoms of your feet. Now see your stem grow thicker and stronger.*
>
> *Feel the top of your head reaching up for the nourishment of the Sun, while your feet reach down for the nourishment of the earth. Feel the Sun on the top of your head. Bask in its warmth and allow it to coddle you. As you warm in the Sun, feel the top of your head grow a bud. Let the bud grow bigger and bigger with each breath.*
>
> *Now your bud is so big and so nicely warmed that it slowly begins to open. Feel each colorful petal unfurl. Let the movement be slow and delicious. See and feel yourself as this young flower. Imagine that your flower is colored in your favorite hue. Allow yourself to wonder at the miracle of your flower. Feel how Nature supports and nurtures you. Know that you are a beautiful part of Nature. As one of Nature's children you are open to her wisdom. You contain her wisdom and can access it at any time. All you have to do is calm your mind and breathe.*
>
> *Spend a few more moments taking in the sensations of being a flower. When you feel you are done, see your flower grow taller. Allow yourself to morph back into your human shape. Open your eyes slowly. Sit quietly for a minute or two so you can readjust and come back into the room.*

So, how was it for you? Why not spend some time journaling in your Book of Shadows about your experience? And while you're at it you could draw that pretty spring flower, too!

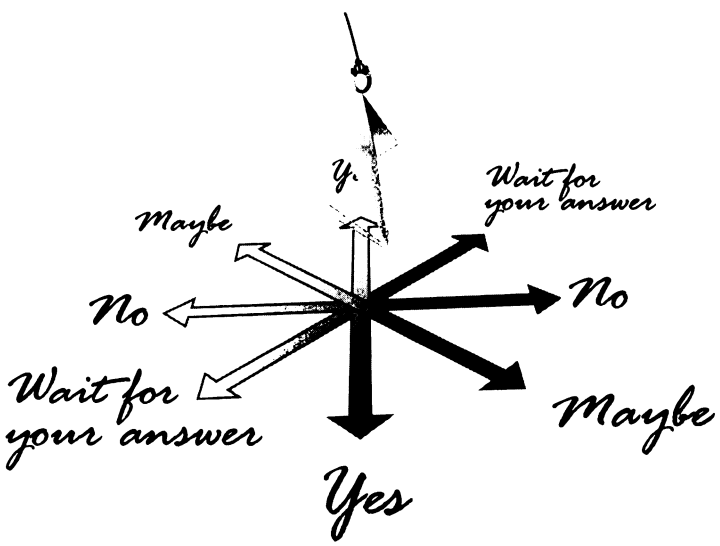
Divination

Over the centuries people have used a variety of *divination* techniques. We haven't had the chance to discuss this topic in depth, but divination is a skill for you to begin to cultivate now. As a witch, it is important to be comfortable and familiar with at least one form of divination. Divination will help you with day-to-day decisions by allowing you access to divine guidance. Divination techniques that are popular among Wiccans today include—pendulums, runes, and Tarot cards.

def•i•ni•tion

Divination is the art of looking into the future. Most people think divination techniques work by helping you tap into your psychic and spiritual awareness. The English verb "to divine" comes from a Latin one that means "inspired by the Gods."

Pendulums are popular among witches because they are super easy to use. Why not try using one now? To make your pendulum attach a fishing weight, a piece of jewelry, a spool of thread, or a crystal to the end of a string. Next decide what the pendulum's movements mean. Many people make a card with the pendulum's answers that looks like this:



Hold the loose end of string in one hand and let your pendulum hang. Once it has become still, ask your question. Soon it will answer you by beginning to move again. Some witches use pendulums to help them choose among various items when out shopping.

We discussed runes and gave you a table of their meanings in Chapter 17, so we won't go into them here. But take a few minutes now to go back, reread that section, and study the table. If runes feel like a topic you want to know more about, find yourself a book and start reading.

Webweaving

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Tarot, Second Edition, by Arlene Tognetti and Lisa Lenard (see Appendix A) will tell you everything you've ever wanted to know about the Tarot. It's a great, informative book. And a number of witches assign it to their year-and-a-day students.

Tarot cards are another popular divination tool. A Tarot deck contains 78 cards—22 Major Arcana cards and 56 Minor Arcana cards. The cards of the Minor Arcana are a lot like regular playing cards. They have suits and either numbers or faces. The cards of the Major Arcana bear pictures that represent the significant issues or phases in an individual's spiritual development.

You can read Tarot cards as a means of looking into the future. Or you can use them to help you with a decision or a problem. You can also meditate on the images of the Major Arcana or pull on their energies in your magick.

Spend some time experimenting with your pendulum and Tarot deck. Track down books about divination and investigate the forms that interest you. You want to find a divination technique to which you can relate. Once you have found your chosen method, practice, practice, practice!

Banish!

Don't be in a hurry to buy a deck of Tarot cards. You want to be sure you have found the deck that's right for you. Cards can be a real expense—some decks cost more than $40! Look at as many different ones as you can. Get a feel for each deck. You'll want to see which one speaks to you most strongly. You'll also want to determine which one you will be able to use with ease. There's no sense in getting a gorgeous and expensive deck that is too hard for you to use!

Your Altar

First go back and reread the sections on altars in Chapter 10. Next, you'll want to select the physical object you are going to use as your altar. Maybe you picked an old table that has been hanging around your house for a while. Now your job is to find out as much about that table as you can. Where did it come from? Did it have previous owners? Who were they and what were they like? What was the table used for?

If your table (or other flat-topped object) is made of wood, find out what kind of tree the wood came from. Each tree has its own magickal energy, so if one is part of your altar, you'll want to know just what that vibe is. Here is a list of commonly accepted correspondences for the types of trees often used to make furniture.

Tree/Wood	Magickal Properties and Associations
Ash	Protection, healing, abundance
Aspen	Knowledge, intuition, understanding
Beech	Letting go, renewal, positive outlook
Birch	Purification; protection, especially of the young
Cedar	Balance, spirituality, courage, dreams
Cherry	Success; efficiency, especially in business or manufacturing
Elder	Exorcism, healing, prosperity, joy, protection
Elm	Love, success, renewal of faith
Fir	Wisdom, regeneration
Locust	Healing, protection, cleansing
Maple	Luck, strength, love, family, long life
Oak	Health, strength, power, money, protection
Pear	Hope, lust, love, generosity, growth
Pine	Wisdom, longevity, grounding, fertility, blessing
Rosewood	Psychic powers, healing, divination, love
Walnut	Health, blessing, fertility, mental acumen

Once you have settled on your altar furniture and have determined that its energy is one you can work with, set up you altar. To begin with, place your altar in the East—the direction of Air and beginnings. Later you may move it so that it rests in the North.

Celebrate!

The holidays you will celebrate during this period are Imbolc, Ostara, and Beltane. (Look back to Chapter 14 for more about them.) If you can, try to join a larger group for these Sabbats. It's nice to feel the energy of a bunch of people at holiday time. And a Sabbat celebration can be a good time for you to see how you feel about a specific group or coven and to get a better sense if you prefer to work as a solitaire

or with others. If you can't find a group that holds an open celebration, do ritual to honor the God on your own or invite a few supportive friends to join you.

Summer

Summertime! Long days filled with light, the abundance of fruits and vegetables, the lushness of Nature, and maybe even a vacation! On the Wiccan wheel of the year, the Lord and Lady are at the height of their strength. While you are studying, make sure to get outside and enjoy all the best aspects of the season.

If you began your year-and-a-day study in the spring we hope you have developed a regular meditation practice by now. We also hope you have been writing in your grimoire and Book of Shadows. Keep in mind that these books are valuable tools in your spiritual and magickal development. And you've found a divination skill to practice, too, right?

If you are just starting your study in the summer, dedicate yourself to the Craft and begin your practice of meditation now. You'll also want to start keeping your grimoire and Book of Shadows, too.

Pick a Deity

Summer is the time for you to start researching the mythologies of the Gods and Goddesses. We gave you an introduction to some of the pantheons in Chapter 4. And you will want to read more. Most witches are conversant in the myths and stories of the ancient Greeks and Romans, the Sumerians and Babylonians, Egyptians, the Celts, and the Nordic peoples. Commit to reading some about each of these ancient cultures.

After you have completed your research, pick one deity that you feel you relate to the best. Dedicate your altar space to this one deity. If you are open to it, the deity you have picked will teach you many things over the course of your year and a day. (After a year and a day, you may rededicate your altar to another deity if you so choose.) If you have not set up your altar yet, get a picture or a small statue of your deity (or create one yourself) and bring it out when you do ritual.

Magickal Writing

A couple of times a week, practice writing in Theban script. Yup, it's another commitment! You really want to get proficient with your magickal writing and, although it is a cliché, practice really does make perfect. If you keep working with this alphabet,

pretty soon you will have it memorized. In case you have forgotten, Theban script is a writing system that many Gardnerian witches use. Check out Chapter 8 for more on this topic. (And if you are really into alternate alphabets and symbols, take another look at Chapter 17, too.)

Herbalism 101

With all the plants thriving and blooming, summer is the time for you to begin your study of herbs. So, start reading and get outside and see what kinds of plants are growing in your area. Summer is also a great time to take a class, so why not see if your local herb shop, metaphysical store, or community garden has any offerings that interest you? If you have outdoor space or a sunny window, at the very least, you may want to start growing some herbs at this time. In addition to cultivating herbs, you'll want to learn about wild crafting and harvesting them, too.

Webweaving

For more on plants, magick, and lots of other cool stuff, check out *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Natural Magick* by Miria Liguana and Nina Metzner (Alpha Books, 2006).

Dance, Dance, Dance!

At least once a week for an hour, put on music and dance. Okay, you don't have to call it dancing. Just move your body to the music. Drop your mind and let the rhythm sink into you. If you don't feel comfortable raising your feet, keep them on the floor and let your body sway. Wave and swing your arms, bend your knees, shake and nod your head. Do whatever feels good, and don't worry about how it looks or what your Aunt Rita would say if she saw you.

Even though we are asking you to commit to this action, let a sense of play creep in. If you are having trouble doing this, meditate on Bastet, the Egyptian Goddess of pleasure, dancing, and other good things. You could even imagine her cat-headed form as you dance (or sway) to your music. And don't forget to write about your experiences in your Book of Shadows.

Holidays of Summer

Make sure to celebrate the Summer Solstice (or Litha) around June 21. You'll need to check a witches' or astrological calendar for the exact date of the longest day of the year. Lughnassad, which is associated with the early harvest, is celebrated on August 2.

Sometimes called the Feast of Bread or Lammas, this is a great time to cook up a feast. And why not decorate your home with fruits and vegetables of the season? If you can celebrate these holidays with a larger group, do so, but if not make sure to honor deity on both days. And remember to look back at Chapter 14 for more specifics about these two Sabbats.

Fall

As the hours of sunlight diminish, we naturally turn inward. In olden days the harvesting of crops was a celebration and a preparation for the long, hard winter to come. This is a time to accumulate and take stock. At this time of year, the Lord is preparing for his death at Samhain. And witches are preparing for the more interior season.

Now, let's take a moment to take stock of your progress. If you began your year-and-a-day study in the spring or summer, we hope that you are still practicing meditation. Hasn't it gotten easier? We also hope that you are still dancing and writing in your grimoire and Book of Shadows. These regular practices will help to ground you in the Craft and its knowledge. We also hope that you have become proficient in Theban script, that you have found a form of divination that works for you and that you have been practicing it. Finally, we hope you have had fun, too. In addition to all these activities, you've been dancing and celebrating the Wiccan holidays, right?

If you began your year-and-a-day study in the summer, begin your study of divination now. Please go back to the section on divination earlier in this chapter.

If you are starting your study in the fall, please do a dedication ritual for yourself. You'll also want to begin meditating, keeping your grimoire and your Book of Shadows, and start working on your divination skills. Oh, and one more thing, start your weekly dancing now, too.

Deeper into Herbalism

If you began your study of herbalism in the summer, now is the time for you to move deeper into this ancient art. (If you have yet to start, please do so now.) When researching the magickal properties of herbs, you are going to want to go about it like a real scholar. That means consulting more than one source of information. In the herbal realm, you probably want to check with four different sources—at the least. Herbalism is an art. As such, there is often more than one answer to a question. You need to compare different sources of information to arrive at the answer that's going

to work for you. You also want to develop as broad an understanding of each plant and its uses as you can.

During the fall, in addition to learning about the magickal uses of plants, you'll want to study how to make herbal medicines. In the old days, witches were the healers of the community. So, help keep this ancient tradition alive by learning about tinctures, poultices, plasters, and medicinal teas. If there is a class in your area that's not too expensive, sign up.

Webweaving

Paul Beyerl has written a couple of super useful books on herbs and their magickal and curative properties. The hugely popular Scott Cunningham has also written on herbs and magick. Check out Appendix A for the 411 on these titles, then look for them in your local library or book shop.

Astrology 101

Fall, with its inward-turning gaze, is the perfect time to begin your study of astrology. If you are dressed warmly, fall is also a super time for looking at the night sky. The crisper, drier air allows the stars to shine bright and clear. And there's nothing like a starry night to inspire a sense of wonder and connection. Take some time now to look back to Chapter 20 for more on this complex and fascinating topic. Find some books on astrology that you can relate to. Check out the resources on the Internet, too. And why not go and get yourself a witches' calendar or almanac for the new calendar year?

Treasures from the Earth

Fall is also the time to begin your study of stones and crystals. As you know, just like living beings, each crystal or stone has its own energy vibration. A knowledge and understanding of this energy can enhance your magick. You can also use crystal energy in healing work. Think of your learning in this area as a form of worship. By gaining an understanding of Nature's deep dwelling treasures, you are honoring Nature and the earth herself.

We gave you some basics on stones and crystals in Chapter 18. Use that information as a jumping off point for your own exploration. As a scholar of Wicca and witchcraft, you are going to want to read the writing of at least two different authors on this topic. And why not schedule a visit to a rock and mineral show or an exhibit of stones at a natural history museum?

Music and You

You've been listening to music once a week and moving your body, right? Well, fall is the time for you to get even more into the music. You are going to learn to play an instrument or take voice lessons. This experiential learning will help you open up your mind to a different way of thinking and to unfamiliar forms of communication. In fact, the study of music can help you to hear the voice of Spirit. And besides, witches need witches who can play instruments and sing! Music is an important part of ritual. It honors the Lord and Lady, engages our spirits, helps to reinforce ties of community, and, after you get over your initial shyness, it's fun to perform, too. Oh, did we mention that next season you will be performing?

The instrument that you take up is entirely up to you. To make it easy on yourself, pick an instrument with a fixed pitch, such as piano, keyboard, recorder, or accordion. (Okay, Katherine really wants to learn to play the accordion!) String instruments, such as guitars, mandolins, violins, and cellos, need to be tuned often, and if you don't have a good ear, this can be tricky. For those of you who consider yourself tone deaf, don't worry! Anybody can learn to play an instrument. You don't have to be a rock star, a diva, or a prodigy to become reasonably proficient. So, what are you waiting for, choose an instrument and start practicing!

Deeper into Divination

The weather is cooling, and perhaps, where you live, the leaves are turning. This is a great time to refine your divination skills. Have you been practicing Tarot? Then learn more about this fascinating subject. Read books by two or more authors on the Tarot. If you are drawn to runes, now is the time to learn all about them. So, pick two books, read up, and start casting.

Fall Celebrations

Mabon (September 21) and Samhain (October 31) are the Sabbats you will celebrate during the fall. At Mabon, night and day are of equal duration and there is a sense of winding down. Samhain, as you know, marks both the death of the Lord and the Witches' New Year. Hold a celebration to honor the dead on this day or join with some other witches to do so.

Winter

Winter is the time of the inward gaze and of nurturing your interior. Hibernation, darkness, and introspection reign. Mediation and divination are natural pastimes during the long, cold nights. This is a great time to rest and gather your energies for the busy spring to come. But winter is also a time that we need to act to keep our spirits up.

If you began your study in the spring, you have accumulated a lot of knowledge and have developed some good habits and practices. You are about to complete your course of study. We hope you have enjoyed your journey!

If you are just starting your study now, dedicate yourself, begin to meditate, write in your magickal books, and start to move your body to music. You can also start reading about herbalism at this time.

The (New) Musical You

Okay, don't say we didn't warn you—winter is the time for you to perform your music in front of others. So, early in the season, set a date for when this will occur. We're not saying you have to climb on stage at Carnegie Hall. You can just play for a few friends or at a family gathering. If you're lucky enough to be taking music lessons, perhaps you and your teacher will be able to arrange a recital. The point is for you to use your newfound skills.

If you are just beginning your year-and-a-day study in the winter, start to learn an instrument now with the goal of performing in the spring.

So Mote It Be

If the idea of performing makes you panic, take heart! Did you know that our word "panic" comes from the name of the God Pan? And you remember that Pan is a musician, the player of the syrinx, otherwise known as the panpipes? So, imagine Pan and his beautiful music when you play, and let your feelings of fear dissolve into those of excitement.

Interpreting a Chart

If you began your study of astrology in the fall, have a chart printed up. (If you have not begun your study of astrology, start it now.) You can use your own chart or someone else's. (There are a number of online sites that will generate charts for you, and some of them are even free.) Spend as much time as you need examining the chart,

but treat this exercise as a test. Do the best and most complete reading of the chart that you can. Then write up your findings. Try to be objective about your work. Imagine that you are someone else. As that other person, do you find the reading complete? Is it satisfying? If you feel you have done a good job, pat yourself on the back for all your efforts. If not, pat yourself on the back anyhow, and go back to work!

Look Deep

The long, cold nights of winter are the time for you to take up scrying. (We touched on this topic in Chapter 6.) Another form of divination, scrying is practiced by looking into a reflective surface. There you may see images of the future or ones that can help you in your spiritual development. Many witches use water for scrying. Others use crystal balls, specially prepared scrying glasses or mirrors, or pieces of obsidian.

Try scrying with water. To do this, fill a black pan—one of those old cast-iron frying pans would be ideal—with water. Or fill your cauldron. Light a candle and pull up a white protective light all around you. Stare into the water. After some time, you may start to see swirls of color or a mist. Some of these may grow into images. If they don't, don't worry. Give your eyes a rest and try again in a few days.

If you have a piece of dark, polished stone, and feel so inclined, go ahead and try scrying with that. Commit to practice scrying—with water or a stone or whatever—a few times every week and see what you can begin to see.

For those of you just beginning to study, refer back to the earlier sections of this chapter and start working on your divination skills. You will start to practice scrying in the fall.

Your Thoughts, Please

Because Wicca is an individualized religion, a thinking person's faith, it is important for you to be able to articulate your thoughts and feelings about the Craft. Sure, writing in your Book of Shadows is a start. But you'll also want to do some more formal writing. Here are two ways to start:

- **Write an essay on your favorite aspect of the Craft.** Give this topic some serious thought. Explain why the features you picked as favorites are your favorites. Write about one full typed page. Even if this piece of writing is not one of your favorite things, share it with a friend or with another witch. Working as a solitaire, it's important for you to reach out and connect with

others. And make sure to save a copy of your work in your Book of Shadows so you can look back at it in the years to come.

- **Write a comparison between your experience of Wicca and the other religious experiences you have had.** Even if you grew up as an atheist, you can still write about how your practice of Wicca is the same and how it is different from the way you were raised. Again, write at least one typed page, share your writing, and stash a copy away for future reference.

Webweaving

If you enjoy reading about the personal experiences of other witches, check out Phyllis Curott's *Book of Shadows: A Modern Woman's Journey into the Wisdom of Witchcraft and the Magic of the Goddess*. Curott, the author of a number of books and a practicing attorney, details her journey into the Craft in 13 engrossing chapters. Turn to Appendix A for details.

The Many Traditions

Spend some time reading about the varied traditions of the Craft. Most witches can talk (and talk and talk and talk!) about the different witchcraft traditions. Don't let yourself be left out of the conversation! If you're thinking of joining a coven, it's really important that you are comfortable with the tradition of that coven and that you know what you may be getting yourself into. Remember to consult at least two different sources on this topic.

Your Yule

Make sure to celebrate Yule at the time of the Winter solstice. The longest night of the year, this solstice occurs on or close to December 21. At this time, the God and his light are reborn. So, even though it is still cold and dark, things are looking up! And if they aren't, why not use your newfound musical skills to help raise your spirits and those of others? Hang some holly and mistletoe, while you are at it, and have some friends over for feast.

Your Year Is Done!

You've worked hard and should be proud. You've developed some important new practices—meditation, divination, and physical movement among them. You've honed your knowledge, explored, and found new areas to investigate. By this time, you should

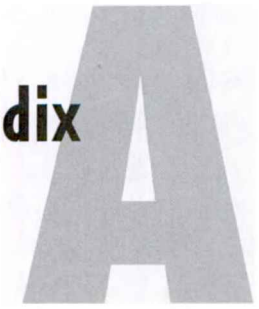
have accumulated a great library of reference resources and a strong bibliography of titles—both of those you have read and of those you want to read.

After completing your year-and-a-day study, you may want to consider doing an initiation. If you are working as a solitaire, you can write your own self-initiation ritual or use one from a book. Whatever you do, keep studying, learning, and absorbing. The more you know about Nature in all of her facets, the earth, and deity, the stronger and better witch you will be.

Congratulations on all your good work! And blessed be!

The Least You Need to Know

- Starting your practice of Wicca may feel like work, but making the effort is worth it! Move forward at your own pace, and enjoy the journey.
- Spring, the time of new beginnings, is the traditional time to bring neophytes into the Craft. This is also a great time for you to start your study of the esoteric arts.
- Summer is great for learning about deities and herbs and practicing Theban script. It's also great for dancing!
- Fall is great for deepening your knowledge and turning inward. Focus on stones, crystals, music, and astrology. Deepen your understanding of herbs and their uses.
- During winter the vibe is more inward. This is a great time for writing, playing music, interpreting astrological charts, learning to scry, and reading about the many different traditions of witchcraft.



Resources

There's a great wealth of published material on Wicca, witchcraft, and related topics. Once you start investigating, you'll find books, videos, and CDs that will help guide you along your path. Use this list as a starting place. When you go looking for one of the titles listed here, browse the books in the surrounding area and see what else catches your eye and speaks to your heart.

Suggested Reading

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Suggested Viewing

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Suggested Listening

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Rowland, Mike. *The Fairy Ring,* Emd/Narada, 1982.

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Suggested Surfing

The Witches' Voice: www.witchvox.com

Pagan and Proud: paganandproud.bravepages.com/

Mystic Wicks: www.mysticwicks.com/

Appendix B

Creating Your Grimoire

Although there are no rules to follow when creating your grimoire, when you're just starting out you might be looking for some guidance. Remember that a grimoire is a how-to book that will allow you to recreate a meal you served or a ritual that was particularly successful (or unsuccessful!). It is the book you share with other witches when they say, "Can I have your formula for that heart-healing potion?" or, "I loved your incantation for Drawing Down the Moon. Would you mind if I used it, too?"

This is not the place for private reflection or comments about other witches in your coven. Those belong in your Book of Shadows. The Book of Shadows is your diary or journal. You might include your recipe for spiced cider in your grimoire, for example, but you would describe the party where you served it in your Book of Shadows.

Your grimoire does not have to be an expensive book. In fact, many witches find that a three-ring notebook is the perfect grimoire. You can rearrange pages, loan out recipes to friends, or take a spell into a circle just by removing one page. Other witches type everything into a computer and print what they need, and still others keep their magickal information on notecards in a box. If you put the printed page or notecard into a plastic sleeve, you save it from spilled wax or spaghetti sauce.

Here are some things you might want to include in your grimoire entries:

- Ritual preparations (bath, incense, etc.)
- Date and time

- Location and length of ritual
- Moon phase
- Weather
- Type and purpose of ritual
- Names of participants (or solitaire)
- Ritual clothing and jewelry worn
- Color of candles used
- Altar description
- Creating a circle
- Incantations used
- Deities invited
- Other spirits included
- Food served (with recipes)
- Magickal correspondences for spices and herbs used
- Outcome of ritual

Don't forget that a grimoire can also include photographs of events. A snapshot of a particularly memorable Samhain bonfire or a Beltane feast can help you remember the event. Plus, pictures of friends are a great way to bring a smile to your face when you need a lift.

Following is a page you can copy to get started in putting your own grimoire together. If, however, this format doesn't work for you, create your own Magickal Record template. Not every entry has to look the same or include the same information. It might be that you worked alone and didn't serve food. Or maybe you don't think the weather played a part. Only record what seems important to record.

Keeping a detailed grimoire makes it easier to be consistent in your spellcrafting. It will also help you in tracking your spiritual journey and in guiding other witches on their magickal paths.

Magickal Record

Type Of Ritual: _____

Date & Time: _____ Approximate Length: _____

Phase of the Moon: _____

Planetary Positions

Sun in: _____ Moon in: _____ Location of Ritual: _____

Mars in: _____ Mercury in: _____ _____

Venus in: _____ Saturn in: _____ Purpose of Ritual: _____

Jupiter in: _____ Uranus in: _____ _____

Neptune in: _____ Blue Moon: Yes / No Physical Health: _____

Weather: _____

Deities Invoked: _____

Ritual Tools Used: _____

_____

Chants/Music Used: _____

Oils/Herbs/Crystals Used: _____

_____

People taking part in Ritual:

_____ _____

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Magick Performed/Spells etc:

_____ _____

Format: _____

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Date of Manifestation: _____ Results: _____

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U.S. $16.95

UK £12.99 CAN $18.50

ISBN 978-1-59257-533-6

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